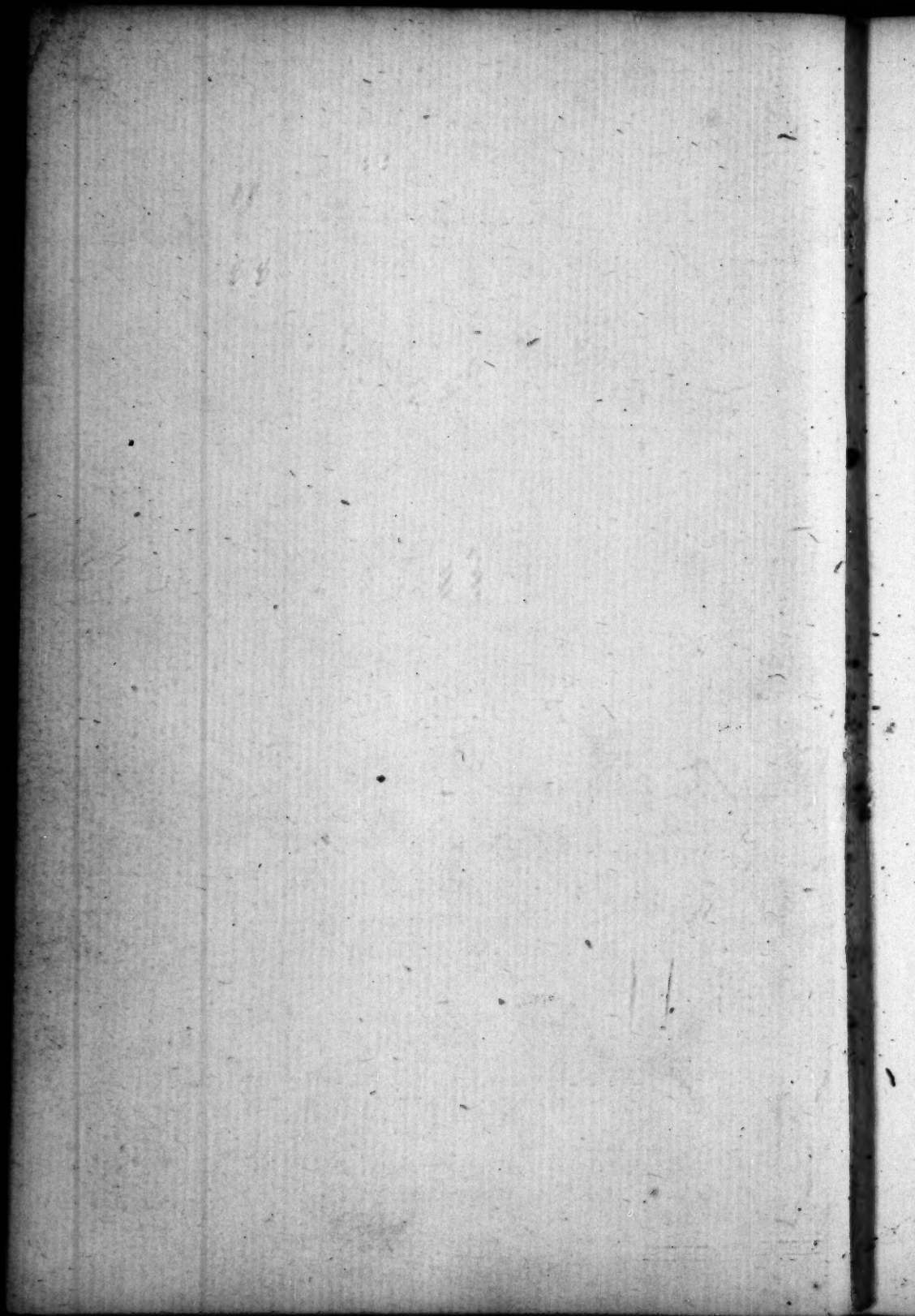


W H I S T:

A

P O E M.

By Alexander Thomson Esq^r
Deanston near Stirling
He died in Buccleugh Place
Edin^g 7 Nov^r 1863 at 40



W H I S T:

A

P O E M,

I N

T W E L V E C A N T O S.

—Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat? — HORACE.

L O N D O N:

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M D C C X C I.

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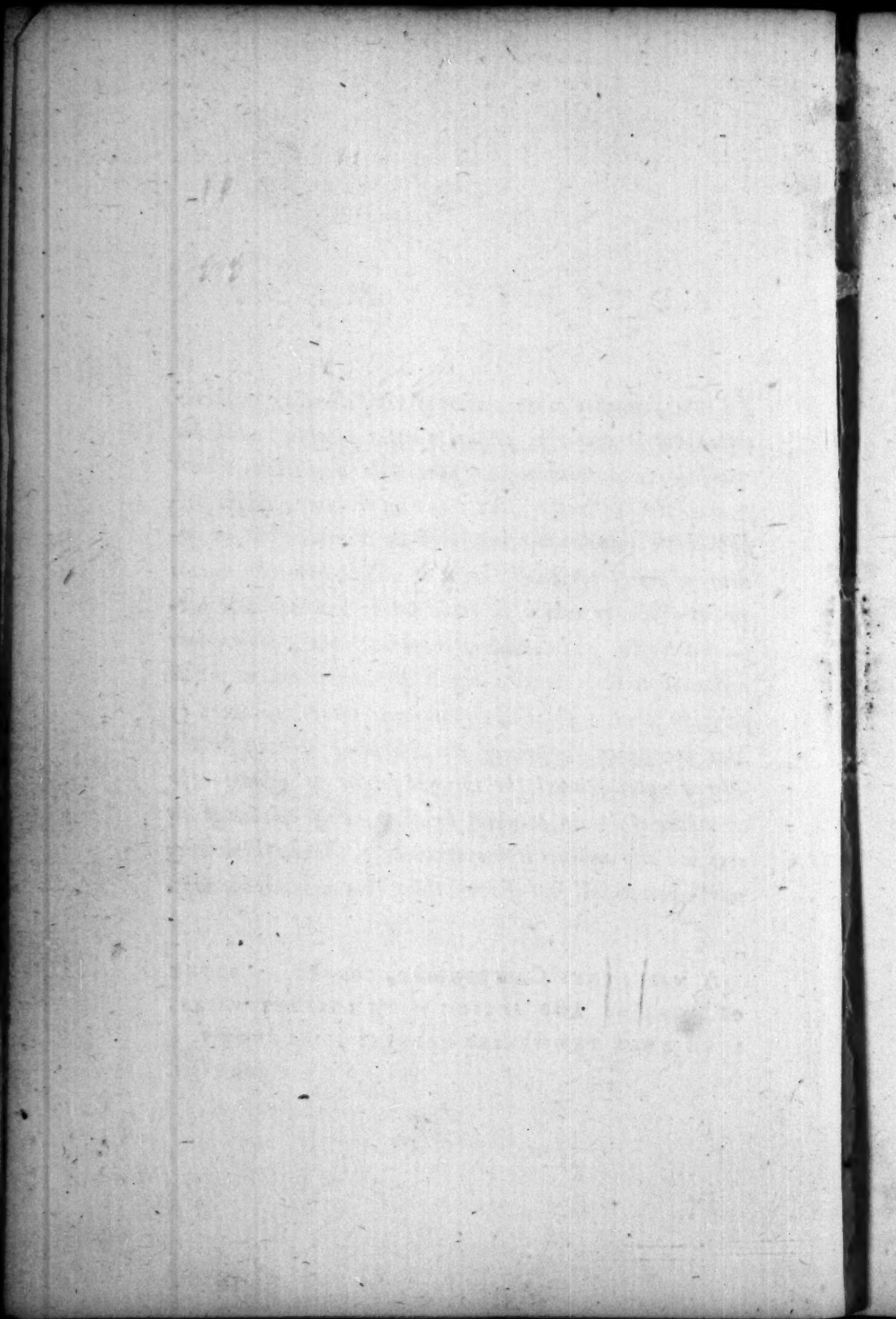
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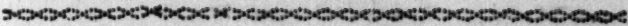
ADVERTISEMENT.

It was suggested to the author of the following performance, that it would be proper to enter a caution with his readers, to prevent any unfavourable impression, which some of the sentiments that occur in the work might possibly leave upon the minds of those to whom he has the honour of being personally known. This however was a species of liberty which he could not by any means be persuaded to take; as he could not suppose any one of his readers endowed with so small a degree of penetration, as not to perceive that most of the sentiments were introduced by him merely in support of the character which, for the sake of embellishment, he thought proper to assume—the character of a vain, petulant stripling, whose opinion of his own wit and abilities is so overweening, that he thinks they entitle him to fall foul of every thing that comes in his way.

A MASK, SAYS CASTIGLIONE, CONFERS A RIGHT OF SPEAKING AND ACTING WITH LESS RESTRAINT, EVEN WHEN THE WEARER HAPPENS TO BE KNOWN.


JOHNSON.





W H I S T.

CANTO I.



ARGUMENT.

Folly of writing on unfashionable subjects.—Several fashionable ones proposed.—Whist chosen.—Plan of the work, and invocation to the spirit of Hoyle.

COFA non detta in *Blank-Verse*, ne'n Rima.

ARIOSTO.

LET vulgar bards some lofty subject chuse,
And court a dull, unfashionable Muse,
In fruitless labour waste their weary days,
Nor solid pudding gain, nor empty praise—
Let them for tragic numbers rack their brains, 5
And soar to all the pomp of epic strains—
Fools that they are! to think their silly art
Can thaw the winter of a modern heart;
To think that those at fancied griefs will cry
Whose dearest friend might drop without a sigh; 10
That those, whose ev'ry step from self proceeds,
Will read with pleasure of heroic deeds,
Virtues admire which never struck their view,
And feel for passions which they never knew.

Let others vainly strive to mend the times, 15
By lashing follies, and exposing crimes:

A 4

While

While I, seduc'd by no such idle rage,
 Turn to account the foibles of the age ;
 Each reigning taste with approbation feed,
 And nothing write, but what the world may read. 20

Fain would I try some fashionable strain,
 And sing the glories of NEWMARKET's plain ;
 Shew by what arts the well-descended horse
 Is train'd, and fed, and fitted for the course ;
 And paint the tumults of each jockey's soul, 25
 When all the panting steeds approach the goal ;
 When now the riders' heels their sides explore,
 And all the verdant turf is stain'd with gore ;
 While each with double force the scourge applies,
 And shame or triumph in one moment lies. 30

Or with what pleasure could the modish Muse
 Her brightest pow'rs and noblest efforts use,
 In praise of him who first, with happy skill,
 * Improv'd the crested bird of clarion shrill,

The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn.

GRAY'S ELEGY.

With

CANTO I.

9

With more than nature's weapons arm'd his rage, 35
Taught him to death the bloody war to wage;
And made what once was but a dunghill fight
A strife which Dukes can witness with delight!

Or, higher still my daring voice to raise,
Shall I attempt th' illustrious boxer's praise; 40
Describe the show'r of thick tempestuous blows,
Which on the foe his heavy hand bestows;
And paint the rapture of th' admiring crowd,
Their eager joy, and acclamations loud,
When, at the last, he knocks him fairly down, 45
For England's glory, and his own renown,
And sends him bleeding from the noble fray,
With batter'd bones and skinless front away?

This could I do, the bold but lucky strain
In time, perhaps, might royal notice gain; 50
And some bright year, the future years among,
With laureat honours might reward the song.

But themes like these (tho' none could better chuse)
Are much too arduous for my humble Muse;

Who

Who dares not trust her young unpractis'd wings 55
To soar the height of such majestic things.

An art there is, of universal fame,
Which he who treats may public honours claim ;
That fav'ry art which teaches how to live,
To ev'ry dish its proper sauce to give, 60
Instructs to boil, to roast, and fricassée,
And callipash compose, and callipee :
All too with which the earth and ample skies,
Or liquid world, the board of man supplies,
This noble art directs us how to use, 65
And Indian Curry make, and French ragouts.
But e'en this task my caution must decline,
And leave to talents better tried than mine.

One theme remains, which, could I treat it well,
Might gain me credit, and perhaps might sell— 70
A sober theme, which yet the young and gay
Would scarce be mov'd to toss with scorn away.
A game I mean—that grave, judicious game,
Which took, as all agree, its warning name

CANTO I.

11

From that strict silence which its rules demand 75
From all that play, or near the players stand.
To such a theme, the 'prentice and the peer,
Her grace and Betty, all would lend an ear;
For scarce one Briton, or one Briton's wife
Exists within the pale of social life, 80
But plays such game as gamesters reckon good,
Or thinks he can, or wishes that he could.—
Nor in those domes of wide-extended fame,
Which bear or White's, or Brookes', or Boodle's
name,
(Where knights, and beaux, and lords, and sharpers
run, 85
Some to undo, but more to be undone;
Where all is hush'd in trembling hope around,
And not one tongue emits an idle sound)
Is this nice game (tho' higher bets are laid)
With deeper thought, or keener ardor play'd, 90
Than in the village alehouse, where the door
Opes with a latch, and sand bestrews the floor;

And

And where th' excifeman lank, of brow fevere ;
 The priest, whose cure is twenty pounds a-year ;
 The farmer grave, in drugget coarfe array'd ; 95
 And the gay miller, whiten'd by his trade,
 Each ev'ning meet, to join in warm debate,
 To drink hot punch, and regulate the ftate,
 Some pence to ftake, and o'er their pipes to risk
 Th' uncertain iffue of a game at Whisk. 100

WHIST, then, delightful WHIST, my theme fhall
 be,

And firft I'll try to trace its pedigree,
 And fhew what fage and comprehensive mind
 Gave to the world a pleafure fo refin'd :
 Then fhall the verfe its various charms difplay, 105
 Which bear from ev'ry game the palm away ;
 And, laft of all, thofe rules and maxims tell,
 Which give the envied pow'r to play it well.

But firft (for fuch the mode) fome tuneful fhade
 Muft be invok'd, the vent'rous Mufe to aid. 110

Cremona's

Cremona's poet shall I first address, *Vida*
 Who paints with skill the mimic war of chefs,
 * And India's art in Roman accents sings ;
 Or him who soars on far sublimer wings,
 Belinda's bard, who taught his liquid lay 115
 † At Ombre's studious game so well to play ?
 But why thus vainly hesitates the Muse,
 In idle doubt, what guardian pow'r to chuse ?
 What pow'r so well can aid her daring toil,
 As the bright spirit of immortal Hoyle ? 120
 By whose enlighten'd efforts Whist became
 A sober, serious, scientific game ;
 To whose unwearied pains, while here below,
 The great, th' important privilege we owe,
 That random strokes disgrace our play no more, 125
 But skill presides, where all was chance before.
 Come then, my friend, my teacher, and my guide,
 Where'er thy shadowy ghost may now reside ;

* Marci Hieronymi Vidæ Scacchia, Ludus.

† Vide Pope's Rape of the Lock, c. iii. 25—100.

Perhaps (for Nature ev'ry change defies,
Nor ev'n with death our ruling passion dies) 130

With fond regret it hovers still, unseen,
Around the tempting boards array'd in green ;
Still with delight its fav'rite game regards,

* And, tho' it plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.

Come then, thou glory of Britannia's isle, 135

On this attempt propitious deign to smile ;

Let all thy skill th' unerring page inspire,

And all thy zeal my raptur'd bosom fire :

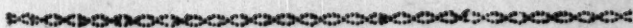
So shall I not disgrace my theme sublime,

Untouch'd as yet in each poetic clime, 140

In free unfetter'd verse, or more melodiousrhime.

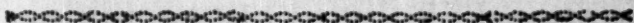
* And, tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.

RAPE OF THE LOCK.



W H I S T.

CANTO II.



ARGUMENT.

Introductory reflections on the invention of Cards—

Difficulty of discovering the inventor of Whist—

Story of Moody and his two Aunts.

Scilicet egregii mortalem atque filenti.]

HORACE.

HOW oft, in this capricious scene of things,
Extensive good from partial evil springs ;
And that for which whole kingdoms now may mourn
A blessing proves to nations yet unborn !
When frenzy's pow'r the Gallic monarch * seiz'd, 5
Derang'd his thoughts, and all his mind diseas'd,
Unhappy France contending factions tore,
† And drench'd her meadows and her streets in
gore :

* Charles VI.

† On se battait dans les rues, dans les églises, dans les maisons, à la campagne.

VOLTAIRE, ESSAI SUR L'HIST. GEN. ch. lxxix.

B

By

By turns she suffer'd from the fierce alarms
 Of feuds domestic, and of foreign arms; 10
 And all-defenceless left, an easy prey
 To our wild Hal's awaken'd spirit lay.

Henry 5

But had this hapless prince escap'd the spleen,
 How dismal now had our condition been!
 Had med'cine's aid his fell distemper cur'd, 15
 What man of taste could now have life endur'd?
 Possess of no resource, no art sublime,
 To banish thought, and kill the tedious time,
 * How oft, like Job, would he have curs'd his day,
 And idly yawn'd the listless hours away! 20
 But chief when sabbath comes with tiresome rest
 To vulgar souls, by weekly toils oppress'd;
 When cruel custom shuts amusement's door,
 And dancers skip, and fingers squeak no more;
 What languor then had all our nerves unstrung, 25
 And o'er each modish house what vapours hung!

* Ahri ken, pethah Ayub ath piéu, vikillal ath Jumu.

JOB, ch. iii. 1.

But now the world is quite another thing,
 Thanks to the madness of the Gallic king ;
 Which, tho' the cause of temporary strife,
 Produc'd the brightest charm of modern life. 30
 Some courtly sage, in that auspicious hour,
 Inspir'd by wisdom's philanthropic pow'r,
 To cheer the darkness of his monarch's mind,
 Some new, unbroach'd delight essay'd to find ;
 * And then to light that fair quaternion sprung, 35 }
 O'er which both high and low, both old and young, }
 Have since, thro' ev'ry age, in rapture hung ;
 Those pow'rful Clubs, which, ev'n when us'd in
 town,
 Can strike, at times, a rural mansion down ;
 Those fatal Spades, which, wielded by a knave, 40
 Have dug for some poor fools an early grave ;

*——Elements, the eldest birth
 Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run,
 Perpetual circle, multiform.

MILTON'S PAR. LOST, V. 180.

Diamonds, which scarce with less attraction shine
 Than those that glitter in Golconda's mine;
 And flaming Hearts, which glow with am'rous fire,
 And love unfeign'd in ev'ry breast inspire. 45
 Then first those wondrous forms arose to view,
 The same for ever, yet for ever new;
 Those Kings in party-colour'd pomp array'd,
 Who now so long have Europe's sceptre sway'd;
 Those Queens, whose charms, superior to decline, 50
 Four ages past, with equal glory shine;
 Those who, in fraud's acknowledg'd liv'ry drest,
 Like other Knaves, are not the less carest:
 And, each in order due—th' inferior train,
 Which paint with red and black the verdant plain; 55
 That spotted train, whose amicable strife
 With brilliant hues diversifies our life.

But men had long these noblest books perus'd,
 And long with various games their hours amus'd,
 Ere Whist appear'd, the charm of ev'ry heart, 60
 The last best effort of inventive art.

Let

* Let India vaunt her children's vast address,
 Who first contriv'd the warlike † sport of Chés;
 Let nice Picquette the boast of France remain,
 And studious Ombre be the pride of Spain; 65
 Invention's praise shall England yield to none,
 While she can call delightful Whist her own.

But to what name we this distinction owe,
 Is not so easy for us now to know:
 The British annals all are silent here, 70
 Nor deign one friendly hint our doubts to clear:
 Ev'n Hume himself, whose philosophic mind
 Could not but love a pastime so refin'd;

* Telle fut la manière d'écrire des Indiens. Leur esprit paraît encore davantage dans les jeux de leur invention. Le jeu que nous appellons les Echecs, par corruption, fut inventé par eux; et nous n'avons rien qui en approche; il est allégorique comme leurs fables; c'est l'image de la guerre.

VOLTAIRE, ESSAI SUR L'HIST. GEN. ch. iii.

† Ludimus effigiem belli, simulataque veris

Prælia——

VIDÆ SCACCHIA, I.

Ungrateful Hume, who till his dying day
Continued still his fav'rite game to play* ; 75

'Tho' many a curious fact his page supplies,
To this important point a place denies.

Here might some bards unlock their classic store,
And deck their verse with mythologic lore ;
To wisdom's Queen th' invention might assign, 80
Or Jove himself, or ev'n the tuneful Nine.

But I should scorn my readers to deceive,
Or tell them aught but what they could believe :
And now, alas ! the whole Olympian state
Has lost its credit, and is out of date ; 85
Our wits, to whom their names are quite a bore,
Would only skip such pretty stories o'er :

Upon his return to Edinburgh, though he found himself weaker, yet his cheerfulness never abated ; and he continued to divert himself, as usual, with correcting his own works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends ; and sometimes, in the evening, with a party at his favourite game of whist.

LETTER FROM DR. SMITH TO WILL. STRAHAN.

For

For which good cause no borrow'd light divine
 Shall gild this round unvarnish'd tale of mine;
 In which the doubtful voice of vague renown 90
 The likely Sire of Whist has handed down;
 Which o'er its birth a glimm'ring lustre throws,
 Nor tells, but rather guesses how it rose.

A Yorkshire dame invok'd the midwife's care,
 And blest her husband with a son and heir. 95
 His infant frame appear'd robust enough,
 But scarcely made of penetrable stuff:
 Nor bitter squall, nor whimper deep and low,
 Announc'd his entrance on the stage of woe.
 When on his face the sacred fluid fell, 100
 No cry escap'd, his sad surprize to tell.
 With rattling toys he still refus'd to play,
 * And from his coral tore the bells away.

* I threw away my rattle before I was two months old; and
 would not make use of my coral, till they had taken away the
 bells from it.

SPECTATOR, No. 1.

When loud or piercing sounds assail'd his ear,
 Each look betray'd his horror and his fear : 105
 But chief he seem'd to dread the strife of tongues ;
 For then alone he strain'd his little lungs,
 And with a rueful face incessant roar'd,
 Till the storm ceas'd, and silence was restor'd.
 Hard was the task and wearisome, to teach 110
 His backward tongue the mimic art of speech ;
 Nor, when at last your patience won the day,
 Did he, like other babes, your care repay.
 Ne'er did his prattle charm a parent's ear ;
 He scarcely utter'd twenty words a year. 115
 Oft would he fly to some sequester'd nook,
 To pore in quiet o'er a pictur'd book ;
 Or sit whole hours immers'd in thought profound,
 With eyes that fondly lov'd the senseless ground ;
 Till nature's wants, from which no frame is free, 120
 Rous'd the young Stoic from his reverie.

To school for once he went ; but threat nor pray'r
 Could force his feet again to venture there ;

Not

CANTO II.

25

Not that, like some, his task had wrought him woe
(His wit was quick, altho' his tongue was slow); 125

Nor that he fear'd the master's awful nod
(Th' attentive scholar seldom dreads the rod) :

His fear was only from the boist'rous noise

Rais'd by so many wild unruly boys :

Their savage tumult tore his tender ear, 130

Distrest him more than what his frame could bear ;

And, had his parents forc'd him still to go,

Might soon have sent him to the shades below.

A grave and sober tutor next was found,

To lead him softly thro' the classic ground. 135

One charge there was he never would obey—

A task of any length aloud to say :

The yielding tutor took it written down ;

But then he seldom read it with a frown.

His parents thus, of temper soft and mild, 140

In all his freaks indulg'd their wayward child ;

Not without hope that gravity so young,

Such love of silence, such command of tongue,

When

When the wild season of caprice was past,
 Would surely rise to something great at last— 145
 A judge perhaps, of stern severe renown;
 Perhaps a bishop, drest in hallow'd gown;
 Or at the worst a mayor in some adjacent town. }

When twice nine years had thus at home been
 spent,

The grave young Moody was to Cambridge sent; 150
 Where, led by no temptation's pow'r astray,
 He pass'd the time in his accustom'd way;
 Seldom abroad, or in the common hall,
 Read much, heard little, and spoke none at all.

But now stern fate his father call'd away, 155
 And sent him home, impatient to allay
 Maternal anguish for a loss so great,
 And take possession of his own estate;
 In which he hop'd, remote from noise and strife,
 To pass in peace profound his future life— 160
 Peace, the dear idol of his stoic mind,
 Which ev'n in Cam's retreats he could not find;

For

For there some youths, who felt a barb'rous joy
Their graver neighbour's comfort to destroy,
Each art employ'd that to their fancies rose, 165
His ears to wound, and murder his repose.

At home arriv'd, his father's widow'd mate
With transport sprung; to meet him at the gate;
But not alone—with her two virgins came,
Who long had kept that venerable name; 170
For fluent tongues o'er all the country fam'd.
They both to him an aunt's relation claim'd.

But who can tell with what unruly joy
They welcom'd home the long-departed boy;
From ey'ry mouth what floods of kindness broke; 175
How all at once with eager fury spoke;
How each by turns to raise their voices tried;
How much was ask'd; how little was replied!

The youth, in chains of mute amazement bound,
And almost deafen'd by the mighty sound, 180
With patience yet the rousing larum bore,
In hopes its violence would soon be o'er;

And

And that the dames, before the close of day,
 Would kindly take their eloquence away.
 Impatient oft he call'd the friendly night, 185
 * And oft with pleasure view'd the failing light :
 But, oh, how killing was his sad surprise,
 How much of horror fill'd his gloomy eyes ;
 What looks of dumb despair to heav'n were cast,
 When, after waiting long, he found at last 190
 That both were doom'd, by fate's perverse decree,
 Perpetual inmates of the house to be ;
 Call'd by their sister, when she lost her mate,
 To soothe her sorrows with their charming prate !
 With such fair prospects op'ning to his view, 195
 What now, alas, could luckless Moody do ?
 How dire the thought, that each succeeding day
 In such a whirlwind must be pass'd away !
 Ev'n from his inmost soul the mourner sigh'd ;
 Low sunk his heart, and all his courage died. 200

• Polla pros Æelion kephalèn trepe pamphaneênta,
 Dūnai epeigomenos.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, xiii. 29.

But .

CANTO II.

29

But still resolv'd to snatch from vocal strife
 Whate'er his wayward fate allow'd of life,
 A mind he feign'd on studious thoughts intent,
 Each morning duly to his chamber went,
 And there the precious hours with silence spent. 205

But no excuse could save the closing day
 From always passing in a social way :
 His own politeness could not this refuse,
 Nor yet so ill his mother's sisters use.

Then rose the storm; but ere its rage was o'er, 210
 And left thy bark on midnight's quiet shore,
 How much, ill-fated youth, thy patience bore !

And oft assail'd at once by all the three,

* Thy dearest foe might sure have pitied thee.

One had a scheme to better his estate, 215

And one advis'd him how to chuse a mate ;

The third, determin'd not to be outdone,

Would kindly teach him how to rear his son.

¶ Would I had met my dearest foe in heav'n.

SHAKESPEAR'S HAMLET, Act I, Sc. 4.

Then

Then enter'd fell Debate, with angry face ;
 Each eager tongue assum'd a quicker pace, 220
 And Peace affrighted rose, and fled the dang'rous
 place. }

A short-liv'd calm had now the strife compos'd ;
 He seiz'd the moment, and Quadrille propos'd ;
 In hopes, when fairly once engag'd in play,
 They could not leisure find so much to say.— 225
 But soon the youth these hopes abortive found ;
 Ten cards to each were scarcely dealt around,
 When one, to *pass* by poverty constrain'd,
 Against her luck in accents loud complain'd.
 The next, who oft enquir'd, with anxious care, 230
 Of red and black how many trumps there were,
 Remain'd awhile on doubt's uncertain ground,
 And sought advice from all the table round :
 If *leave* she *ask'd*, the game was too secure ;
 Nor would her cards permit her to *obscure*. 235
 Resolv'd at last to win or hazard all,
 She boldly ventur'd for a *king to call*.

But

But now the third, who long had silent fate,
 And heard with wicked joy the deep debate,
 At once *sansprendre's* pow'r resistless claim'd, 240
 And with exalted voice her trumps proclaim'd.
 Thus fairly started ev'ry nimble tongue,
 And all the house with terms of science rung;
 While now the *vole* was lost, and now *codille*,
 And *hearts*, and *matadores*, and *forc'd spadille*.* 245

* The author having here adopted the French mode of playing quadrille, as admitting of the greatest variety of description, it will be proper to explain some of the terms, which may not be familiar to the English reader.

Obscuring (v. 235) is that mode of playing in partnership, by which, when you have three good suits in your hand, you leave the choice of trumps from amongst them to the person who happens to hold the king of the fourth.

Calling, or rather *taking a king*, (v. 237) is a cautious method of playing alone, by the assistance of a king of any suit but trumps, borrowed, or rather bought from another hand.

See ACADEMIE DES JEUX.

24

W H I S T.

CANTO III.

C

ARGUMENT.

Continuation of the story of Moody and his Aunts,
including the invention of the game of Whist.

Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift.

MILTON.

Quis potis est dignum pollenti pectore carmen
Condere, pro rerum majestate, hisque repertis ?
Quisve valet verbis tantum, qui fundere laudes
Pro meritis ejus possit, qui talia nobis
Pectore parta suo, quæsitæque præmia liquit ?

LUCRETIVS.

FOR three long winter months in chat or play

'The social ev'nings thus had pass'd away ;

Till, once of life and all its comforts tir'd,

The youth indignant to his couch retir'd :

There to his sick'ning soul whilst all below

Seem'd but a weary length of hopeless woe,

* In this black channel did his musings flow.

“ How have I this deserv'd, ye pow'rs divine ?

“ † For what offence, what grievous sin of mine,

* In this black channel would my ravings run.

YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS, vii. 652.

† Oh, what is my sin ? what is my sin ?

B. JONSON'S SILENT WOMAN, Act 2, Sc. 2.

" Am I condemn'd in this terrestrial hell, 10
 " This den of strife, this windmill dome* to dwell ?
 " Nor wealth nor fame have e'er engross'd my care ;
 " For peace alone I breath'd my fervent pray'r :
 " And yet stern fate the humble suit denies,
 " And still beyond my reach the blessing flies. 15
 " Thrice happy fire, within thy dark retreat,
 " Of sacred rest the blest eternal seat ;
 " Where no rude sound invades thy silence deep,
 " Alarms thine ear, or breaks thy quiet sleep :
 " While here thy wretched son must waste his
 life 20
 " In the dire whirlpool of perpetual strife ;
 " And sees, alas ! no prospect of repose,
 " Till death at last his weary eyes shall close."
 While thus he lay, resign'd to grief's controul,
 A ray of sudden light illum'd his soul ; 25

* I dwell in a windmill.

B. JONSON'S SILENT WOMAN, Act 5, Sc. 3.

CANTO III.

37

nvention's godlike pow'r his breast inspir'd,
 And eager hope his bright'ning spirit fir'd.
 ' Had I the happy skill some game to find,
 ' Whose charms so strongly might attach the mind,
 " And for such strict, severe attention call, 30
 " As could not fail to stop the tongues of all.
 " Suppose impartial chance two pairs to bind,
 " In leagues offensive and defensive join'd ;
 " Nor side by side allow the friends to sit,
 " But each in front of each at distance sit : 35
 " There while each card retain'd its native place,
 " Unless the lord of all, th' imperial ace,
 " None should, as in *Quadrille*, be useless found,
 " But, one by one, the pack be dealt around ;
 " Thirteen to each, until the last of all, 40
 " Which turning up, the dealer Trump should call.
 " But when the strife begins, on either side,
 " Tricks to secure let ev'ry art be tried ;
 " For each new *lift*, when six are gain'd before,
 " Shall with another point augment the Score. 45

C 3

" Nor

- " Nor yet alone should skill the score advance,
 " For somewhat always must be left to chance.
 " Before another *deal*, let each demand
 " How many *honours* grac'd his partner's hand ;
 " And joining stocks, proceed to reckon those 50
 " By which their number overtop'd their foes :
 " By two and two should fate the band divide,
 " Their presence then shall better neither side ;
 " But three, where'er they fall, for two shall
 count,
 " And four shall reckon for the whole amount. 55
 " On such conditions let the strife proceed,
 " And *deal* to *deal*, and *trump* to *trump* succeed,
 " Till those of better luck, or better play,
 " Shall reckon ten, and bear the palm away.
 " And at the goal should either side arrive 60
 " Before the others reach the point of five,
 " The conqu'ring pair may then with justice claim
 " The praise and profit of a double game.

" But

" But one defeat should ne'er the contest close,
 " Nor yet the victors from their toils repose, 65
 " Till they have first a second game obtain'd,
 " And count a couple for the *rubber* gain'd."

When Archimedes at his bathing hour,
 Inspir'd at last by some propitious pow'r,
 The knotty problem solv'd, with which in vain 70
 He long had rack'd his geometric brain;
 It stands recorded, that the raptur'd sage*,
 To whom each little moment seem'd an age,

* Archimeden de bia tôn diagrammatôn apospôntes funéleiphon hoi therapontes. Ho de epi tés koilias egraphe ta schemata té stlengidi, kai louomenos, hôs phasin, ek tés huperchuseôs ennoías, tén tou stephanou metréfin, hoion ek tinos katochés é epipnoias, exélato boôn, Hewraika.

PLUTARCH, sed ubi haud scio.

Tunc is (Archimedes) cum haberet ejus rei curam, casu venit in Balneum, ibique cum in folium descenderet, animadvertit quantum corporis sui in eo insideret, tantum aquæ extra folium effluere. Itaque cum ejus rei rationem explicationis offendisset, non est moratus, sed exiit gaudio motus de folio, et nudus vadens domum versus, significabat, clarâ voce, invenisse quod quæreret. Nam currens identidem Græcè clamabat, Hewraika, Hewraika.

VITRUVIUS, lib. ix. cap. 3.

Till all the town his mental triumph knew,
 While from the bath with eager haste he flew, 75
 Forgot he was not all compos'd of mind,
 And left his breeches and his shirt behind.
 As thro' the streets he then *bewraika** cried,
 With all the strength of scientific pride,
 The boys and girls, attracted by the sound, 80
 From ev'ry lane and alley flock'd around;
 With wond'ring eyes his naked wisdom view'd,
 And with triumphant shouts his flight pursu'd.
 Our hero thus forgot the darken'd room,
 Sprung from his couch, and stalk'd across the gloom:
 But tho' perhaps with equal rapture seiz'd, 86
 And still more justly with his triumph pleas'd,
 Could yet in decent bounds his joy restrain,
 And very wisely went to bed again.

* A Greek word, which signifies, *I have it*. This is by no means the first time in which it has appeared in English poetry —

“ Cries, *Εὐρηκα*; the mighty secret's found.”

DRYDEN'S *RELIGIO LAICI*, 43.

CANTO III.

41

One sleepless night had pass'd entire away, 99
And more than half of the succeeding day,
Before the youth, by dint of patient thought,
His noble scheme to full perfection brought.
But when amusement's hour arriv'd again,
And cards, as usual, took their turn to reign, 95
He kept no longer to himself confin'd
The bright conception of his plastic mind :
But (while exulting hope and conscious pride
Unwonted boldness to his speech supplied)
Declar'd, that if the venerable three 100
Would deign his pupils for a time to be,
He could a game unfold entirely new,
Yet practis'd only by a chosen few ;
And which he trusted would amuse them more
Than any other they had play'd before. 105

A point like this our hero gain'd with ease ;
For novelty is sure the sex to please.
With soft address, and fascinating art,
Behold him next perform the tutor's part.

Hard

Hard was the task, ideas to explain, 110
 Which yet but vaguely floated thro' his brain;
 And paint the changing hues of shadowy thought,
 Not yet by practice to consistence brought. —
 But this he did as far as words could do:
 A gentle hint was sily added too, 115
 On strict attention, and reserve of tongue,
 How greatly here the hopes of triumph hung.

Now Chance, invok'd, a mate assign'd to each,
 And three sat down to learn, and one to teach.
 The nimble cards around the table ran; 120
 The trump look'd upward, and the strife began.
 In that propitious hour the world's delight,
 The game of silence, first beheld the light;
 Not the rude light of nature's glaring ray,
 But art's politer, more congenial day; 125
 From tapers planted thick the table round,
 Or pendent lamps, with flaming radiance crown'd.
 Each future age shall bless that golden hour,
 And hail with rapture its extensive pow'r,

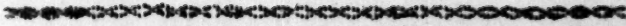
Which

CANTO III.

43

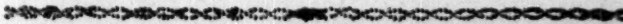
Which came, our life with lustre to adorn, 130
Big with the fate of gamesters yet unborn.

The sisterhood at first forgot the change,
And still, as usual, left their tongues to range ;
For pow'rful habit is not soon supprest,
And female tongues were never form'd for rest. 135
But when they found, severely to their cost,
That they were sure to lose who spoke the most,
That potent voice, which seldom pleads in vain,
Regard to int'rest, and the love of gain,
By slow degrees supprest each idle sound, 140
And ev'ry lip with chains of silence bound.
Some torrent thus from wint'ry mountains long
With foam and fury pours its waves along,
And rolling onward with impetuous sound,
O'erflows its banks, and deafens all around : 145
But when the summer comes, and with him brings
The thirsty spirit on his glowing wings,
By slow degrees the liquid stores decay,
And the rough roar in murmurs dies away ;
Until, at last, its voice is heard no more, 150
And silence reigns where all was noise before.



W H I S T.

CANTO IV.



ARGUMENT.

Sequel of the story of Moody and his Aunts; including
the laws of the game of Whist.

Laws, wise as nature, and as fixt as fate.

POPE.

BUT tho' confusion's voice was heard no more,
And silence reign'd where all was noise before ;
Yet still at times occasions would arise,
Where all restraint the sisters could despise ;
And still disturb the youth's unlucky state 5
With all the violence of keen debate.—
Perhaps the dealer might the cards confuse,
Nor yet her privilege could bear to lose :
Perhaps a card might on the table fall—
Its mistress never meant to play at all ; 10
Who then her error might lament in vain,
And urge her right to take it up again :
Perhaps her haste a trick with trumps had gain'd,
While of the suit her hand a card retain'd—

A fa

A sad mistake ; which, when it once was found, 15
 In endless strife embroil'd the table round :
 Or, worse than all, perhaps oblivion's pow'r
 Had miss'd entirely *scoring's* proper hour ;
 And now too late those honours rose to mind,
 Which to their tricks they might have justly join'd ; 20
 A loss which never pass'd from mem'ry's sight,
 But clouded still each after triumph bright,
 And fill'd with murmur's voice the whole repin-
 ing night.

All this young Moody with displeasure saw,
 And vainly strove to keep the storm in awe : 25
 From this he found, that, tho' so much was done,
 He had not wholly yet the battle won ;
 From this he knew, that somewhat still remain'd,
 Ere silence here a perfect triumph gain'd.
 Oft had he read that tracks of fertile ground, 30
 With lavish nature's richest bounty crown'd,
 In rude neglect and savage wildness lay,
 To desolation and to waste a prey ;

For

CANTO IV.

49

For this one single but important cause,
 The want of regular and wholesome laws. 35
 And, since capricious fortune's blind controul
 Had thus already made his favour'd soul
 The bold discov'rer of a region new,
 Resolv'd to prove its legislator too.

Nor did the strength of his inventive mind 40
 This second task an arduous duty find :
 For two short hours of one tempestuous day
 Suffic'd to range his laws in neat array ;
 And, lest his subjects might, perhaps, disdain
 The recent offspring of his youthful brain, 45
 His prudent art a cautious method chose,
 And feign'd (for fiction well each lawyer knows)
 That he these laws had in the pages found
 Of one whose genius had been long renown'd.
 Success, as usual, crown'd his artful plan, 50
 And, leave of reading gain'd, he thus began.

D

I. The

I.

The cards to shuffle long as may him suit,
 Is ev'ry player's right, without dispute :
 But when this right thro' all the hands has pass'd,
 Still with the dealer it should rest at last ; 55
 Who, ere he deals, should have the painted band }
 Cut by the person on his better hand ; }
 As else th' unlawful deal will never stand. }

II.

If in the pack a card display its face,
 * He must begin again in such a case : 60
 And should he one in dealing chance to turn,
 The foes, if so inclin'd, that deal may spurn.

III.

But if he gives not each his number due,
 To one too many, or to one too few,

* Vide Hoyle, chap. xviii. laws xi. and ix.

CANTO IV.

51

* He then must be content the deal to lose, 65
 Unless his luck supplies the sole excuse,
 That, while he dealt, by either of the foes
 The cards were touch'd; for then we may suppose }
 From them, and not from him, the fault arose.

IV.

Still on the board, the whole commencing round,
 † Let his trump card expos'd to view be found: 71
 Nor, after that, tho' you may trumps enquire,
 Can you of it another sight desire.

V.

Let each, before he play, his hand review,
 And mark if he possesses the number due; 75
 ‡ For should he not, and yet proceed to play, }
 Till he perceives at last a card away,
 He must for each *revoke* the forfeit pay.

* Vide Hoyle, chap. xxii. law xiii.

† Id. chap. xviii. law xviii.

‡ Id. *ibid.* law xii.

VI.

Let each with constant eye the board survey,
 * Nor ask another what he chanc'd to play, 80
 Tho' he may bid him draw his card away.

VII.

Nor here, as in your former game, Quadrille,
 May one examine all the tricks at will :
 The latest can alone return to fight ;
 * The rest must ne'er again behold the light. 85

VIII.

The card which once has fairly touch'd the board,
 Must never more be to the hand restor'd.

IX.

When, from mistake, as it at times proceeds,
 The one rash partner for the other leads ;
 † Then may the foes a just occasion seize, 90
 To make his brother play what suit they please ;

* Hoyle, chap. xxii. law viii.

† Id. chap. xviii. law i.

CANTO IV.

And for that card, which was so keen to fall,
They have a right at any time to call.

X.

For each *revoke* your foe may chance to make,
From his collected tricks you three can take ; 95
Or from his score (if tricks he yet has none)
* Take down three points, or add them to your own :
But this to do you ne'er can urge the right,
Until the trick is turn'd, and out of fight ;
Tho' then its influence boasts a fairer claim 100
Than any other score in all the game.

XI.

The tricks, fair children of superior skill,
Before the casual honours reckon still.

XII.

Remember always, when the hand is o'er,
† At once your honours and your tricks to score ; 105

* Hoyle, chap. xviii. laws iii. and ii.

† Id. *ibid.* law vi.

For should you wait till trumps be turn'd again,
Your right you then may claim, but claim in vain.

XIII.

But if beyond the truth you chance to go,
Your score diminish'd must enrich the foe.

XIV.

The proper season on your friend to *call*, 110
* Is just before your hand a card lets fall;
A moment later, and you lose the claim,
And ev'n a moment sooner is the same.

XV.

† But when the trump has once appear'd in fight,
Let none remind his friend of calling's right. 115

XVI.

Altho' of tricks one side should make them all,
That rarest triumph which a *slam* we call,

* Hoyle, chap. xviii. law xxii.

† Id. *ibid.* law v.

Yet they from this no profit e'er must claim,
Which would not suit the spirit of the game.

Such were the Laws, which now to all appear 120
So just, so useful, so concise, and clear,
That one consenting voice, without delay,
Engag'd their future influence to obey :
And should he doubt their word, for sanction's
fake, }
They proffer'd too, that very hour, to take 125 }
Whatever oath he might be pleas'd to make.

The youth delighted made a pensive pause,
And rising to their fight display'd the laws :
Then the three sisters held their hands on high,
While each upon the ceiling fixt her eye ; 130
And, all in decent order thus dispos'd,
He then in solemn tone his oath propos'd.

“ By Tea and Scandal's ever dear delights ;
“ By Liberty of speech, that first of rights ;

D 4

“ That

“ That right which virgins, wives, and widows
claim, 135

“ To use all freedom with their neighbour’s fame;

“ By all the Joys that pensive mem’ry knows,

“ When to that glorious time she backward goes,

“ When o’er your days the pow’r of courtship
threw

“ The magic lustre of his brilliant hue; 140

“ Whose musky breath perfum’d each precious
hour

“ With the sweet scent of pleasure’s myrtle bow’r :

“ By those Regrets which now your bosoms feel,

“ That virgin pride had arm’d your hearts with
steel,

“ And made you deaf to ev’ry lover’s pray’r, 145

“ Till they at last resign’d the fruitless care,

“ And left you to repentance and despair :


“ And by those Hopes which yet your fancies fill,

“ That, aided by your own alluring skill,

“ Propitious fortune will permit you still 150

“ With festive pomp to deck the bridal day,
“ And pass the night in nuptial joys away.”

Such was that Oath, of strength unknown before;
By whose emphatic words the sisters swore :
Nor need I surely add, that they transgress'd no
more. }



W H I S T.

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

Whist long of coming into repute.—Comparative estimate of its beauties.—First excellence, its promotion of silence.—Digressive excursion to the play-house; and scheme for the improvement of theatrical entertainments.

Ma, d'un parlar ne l'altro, ove son ito
Si lungi dal cammin ch'io facev' ora ?
Non lo credo però sì aver smarrito,
Ch'io non lo sappia ritrovare ancora.

ARIOSTO.

How slow, at first, is still the growth of fame,
And what obstructions wait each rising name !
The brightest efforts of invention's brain
Can ne'er at once extensive notice gain.
Our stupid fathers thus neglected long 5
The glorious boast of Milton's epic song ;
While Waller's weak, and Cowley's rugged line
Were read with rapture, and pronounc'd divine.
And thus, when this our century was young,
(If we may trust what comic bards have sung*) 10

* Vide Congreve, Vanbrugh, Cibber, Farquhar, Centlivre, &c.
passim.

Whilst

* Whilst Ombre and Quadrille at court were us'd,

† And Bassët's pow'r the city dames amus'd,

Imperial Whist was yet but light esteem'd,

And pastime fit for none but rustics deem'd.

‡ When Sullen's wife bewails her wretched state, 15

Condemn'd for life to such a furly mate,

* Ombre (says Sir Francis Wronghead) is a geam at cards,
that the better sort of people play three together at.

PROVOKED HUSBAND, Act 2, Sc. 7.

To spoil the nation's last great trade, Quadrille.

POPE'S MORAL ESSAYS, iii. 76.

† Vide Centlivre's Bassët-Table, and Vanbrugh's City
Wives' Confederacy.

‡ DORINDA. You share in all the pleasures that the country
affords.

MRS. SULLEN. Country pleasures ! racks and torments !
Dost think, child, that my limbs are made for leaping of ditches,
and clambering over styles ? or that my parents, wisely foreseeing
my future happiness in country pleasures, had early instructed
me in the rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at
Whisk, and smoaking tobacco with my husband.

FARQUHAR'S BEAUX STRATAGEM, Act 2, Sc. 1.

She

She hints, that, had her parents wiser been,
 And all the rigour of her fate foreseen,
 They should have taught her, with an early care,
 In all the country's vulgar joys to share ; 20
 Across a five-barr'd gate her neck to risque,
 To drink fat ale, to smoak, and play at *Whisk*.

But Milton's muse at last a critic* found,
 Who spread his praise o'er all the world around ;
 And Hoyle at length for Whist perform'd the same,
 And prov'd its right to universal fame. 26

What game indeed, of all the num'rous list,
 In point of beauty, can compare to Whist ?
 Or which, of all where gold was ever lost,
 So rich a catalogue of charms can boast ? 30

And first, how great its pow'r, in chains of gold,
 Without constraint, the willing tongue to hold !
 That nimble, wicked, wild, rebellious thing,
 Which reason seldom can to order bring,

* Vide Addison's Critique on the Paradise Lost:

When ladies fair convene, their tea to sip, 35
 And scandal's spirit sits on ev'ry lip,
 Impatient sits, until its turn arrive,
 Then bursts like bees impetuous from their hive,
 (Alas ! that words which bear a mortal sting
 * From such a charming honied house should spring !)
 How fatal then the vile malicious rage, 41
 Which spares nor rank nor merit, sex nor age ;
 That rage, whose direful havock to restrain,
 Virtue is weak, and friendship pleads in vain !
 But now let Whist appear, in regal tone, 45
 Commanding silence from his verdant throne ;
 And, lo ! at once the vocal storm subsides ;
 Each accent now in gentle whispers glides ;
 The harsh discordant notes of rancour cease,
 And all is love, and unity, and peace. 50

When fresh from college, in the crowded pit,
 I us'd at first with panting heart to sit ;

* Javabi telkhi mizeibed lebi lali shekerkhara ?

HAFIZ.

Whist

65

55

E

but

Where Whist thro' all the night in silence reigns,
 And ev'ry box a gaming set contains ;
 Who, while more serious scenes their thoughts en-
 gage,

Have seldom leisure to regard the stage.

But now (for time increase of wisdom brings) 65
 How widely different is my sense of things !
 Since knowledge of the world enlarg'd my mind,
 And knowledge of the town my taste refin'd :
 Yet still I curse—but not the charming sound
 Which flows continual from the boxes round ; 70
 I curse those rants of wild unmeaning rage,
 Which rise incessant from the noisy stage ;
 Which o'er the sound of modish tongues prevail,
 Deprive me oft of many a curious tale,
 And drown the smooth address of many a peer, 75
 Before its meaning reach my anxious ear.

but have generally played two or three rubbers at whist in the
 stage-box every opera night.

Dr. MOORE, Lett. lxxiii.

Here

CANTO V.

67

Here let me pause, a project to explain,
Which more than once has struck my fertile brain ;
And which to publish, my impatient mind
May ne'er perhaps a fitter season find. 80

That dome, whose managers incessant strive
To keep the public appetite alive,
And feed their guests, on each returning night,
With varied treats of ever new delight ;
Where yet delight is often sought in vain, 85
And languor and disgust too often reign ;
One simple change might to a temple turn,
Where pleasure's lamp could never fail to burn.
How rich a feast would ev'ry play become,
If, like a pantomime, the scenes were dumb ; 90
And liberty of speech to none allow'd,
But those distinguish'd from the vulgar crowd ;
Who, thron'd betwixt the galleries and pit,
In vaulted cabinets of splendor sit !
We should not then frequent the house to know 95
What Hamlet said a thousand years ago ;

But flock to catch, in the politest way,
The news and scandal of the present day.

What perfect blis from such a scheme appears

* To all our faculties of eyes and ears ! 100

The one delighted with the charms that flow
From graceful action, and the pomp of show ;

The other ravish'd with the full display
Of all that wit and elegance could say.

A plan which promis'd thus their toils to ease, 105

The slothful players could not fail to please ;
Nor would it cost them one triumphant hour,
Or circumscribe their fascinating pow'r.

For sure the SIDDONS, whose expressive eye
Each pause of language can so well supply, 110

Requires no succour from poetic art
To rouse, to soften, or to tear the heart ;
Which, were it made of penetrable stuff,
Would find her gestures and her looks enough.

* The very faculty of eyes and ears.

SHAKSPEAR'S HAMLET, Act 2, Sc. 3.

Nor

Nor less applause would crown the graces wild 115
 Of sportive JORDAN, Nature's charming child ;
 Whose romps*, tho' mute, would be resistless still,
 † And all the house with endless laughter fill.

But much as those would love the change who sit
 Or in the boxes, or the crowded pit ; 120
 I fear those vulgar souls, who perch'd on high
 Behold improvement with a jealous eye,
 Would loudly all against the motion cry. }
 But managers would from their duty stray,
 Did they to such a voice attention pay ; 125
 Or risque offending the politer few,
 To please the taste of such a tasteless crew.
 Besides at times, or even once a week,
 A play for them might be allow'd to speak.

* Vide Priscilla Tomboy, Miss Hoyden, Miss Prue, Peggy,
 the Virgin Unmask'd, &c.

† Asbestos d'ar enôrto Gelôs, makareffi Theoisin.

HOMER'S ILIAD, i. 599.

* The Orphan then, or some such vulgar thing, 130
Might 'prentice girls and country boobies bring;

† Who there might all in maudlin concert whine,
And wet their handkerchiefs at ev'ry line;

* The tender poet of domestic woe,
Whose Orphan, wedded in a luckless hour,
Oft as her story on the scene appears,
In all the native eloquence of grief,
Spite of that monster Fashion's impious rage,
Calls from the gen'ral eye a vulgar tear.

This unfashionable rant is taken from a late poem, entitled, *The Choice* (c. iii. 114); which is full of affectation, bombast, and romanticity; which abounds with antediluvian notions about love and friendship, virtue and taste; and in which there is not the smallest knowledge of the world, nor the least attempt at wit or humour. But what makes the passage above quoted still more ridiculous than it would otherwise have been, is its being put into the mouth of Avarice; a personage, who, though none of the votaries of fashion, was never remarkable, so far as I have heard, for being fond of dropping the *tears of sensibility*: a striking proof into what gross blunders those authors are apt to fall, who give themselves up to the guidance of enthusiasm, and allow their fancy to run away with their judgment.

† No crowds may be let in, no maudlin gazers,
To wet their handkerchiefs, and make report,
How like a saint she ended.

ROWE'S *L. JANE GRAY*, Act 5, Sc. 1.

And

CANTO V.

71

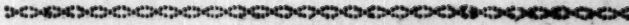
And (filly souls !) to shew their sorrow, strive
 That she should die who never was alive : 135
 While we devoted the remaining nights
 To those refin'd and elegant delights,
 Which none can relish but the chosen band,
 The flow'r and cream of each admiring land ;
 Who down the smooth expanse of fashion's tide
 In pleasure's painted barge securely glide, 141
 And o'er the glitt'ring wave in splendid triumph
 ride. }

Perhaps the furly critic here will say,
 That I have grossly wander'd from my way ;
 And ask me what connection can subsist 145
 Betwixt my project and the game of Whist ?
 But most of those who may the song peruse,
 That public spirit will, I trust, excuse,
 Which led me thus the rules of art to spurn,
 And leave my theme—to which I now return ; 150
 But in another Canto, if you please,
 Both for my own, and for the reader's ease :

For this, tho' short, too much of sense contains,
 Not to be kept apart from lighter strains ;
 And having from the point so far digress'd, 155
 * My wearied muse requires a little rest.

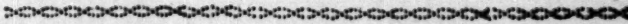
* Non più, Signor, non più di questo canto,
 Ch'io son già rauco, e vo' posarmi alquanto.

ARIOSTO, ORLANDO FURIOSO, xiv. 134.



W H I S T.

CANTO VI.



ARGUMENT.

Comparative estimate of Whist resumed.—Second excellence, its superiority of interest.—Third, its independence on the principle of avarice ; and, in consequence of this, its connection with economy.—Story of Cardelia and Sir John Gormaw.

No hay que dudar, sino que esta arte y exercicio excede á todas aquellas
y aquellos que los hombres inventaron.

CERVANTES.

LET all the games that ask but little skill,
Loo, Commerce, Comet, Basset, and Quadrille,
Like twinkling stars that dimly gild the night,
Shrink from the blaze of Whist's refulgent light :
Nay more, let those that higher rank may claim, 5
Let nice Piquette, and Ombre's studious game,
(Tho' each has charms) the fruitless contest yield,
And to the silent sport resign the field.
For which of these can boast the pow'r to bind
In chains of equal strength the captive mind ? 10
Can each, or all, such anxious thought inspire,
Or with such ardour keen the spirit fire ?
Can they so much the loser's peace destroy,
Or fill the winner's breast with equal joy ?

Can, at Piquette, the *huitieme* and *quatorze* ; 15
 Quadrille's triumvirate of *matadores* ;
Fifteens at Cribbage, or the *pam* at Loo ;
 With such ecstatic rapture blefs the view,
 As when at Whist the firm quadruple band
 Of honour'd chiefs enrich a fingle hand ? 20
 Or, what is oft of more importance found,
 When strength of *cards* with strength of *trumps* is
 crown'd ?

But fome will here object, that fuch applaufe,
 So far from helping, rather hurts the caufe ;
 Since all will grant that paftimes were design'd, 25
 * Not to employ, but to relieve the mind ;
 And therefore thofe that leave it moft at eafe
 Have furely far the faireft claim to pleafe.
 But they that argue thus from fenfe depart,
 And know but little of the human heart ; 30

* Cards were at firft for benefits design'd ;
 Sent to amufe, and not enslave the mind.

EPILOGUE TO THE GAMESTER, 30.

Which

Which not in pleasure's self can pleasure find,
Unless it comes with agitation join'd ;
Which basking warm in fortune's sunshine clear,
Sighs for the shifting clouds of hope and fear ;
And tir'd with looking on the listless deep, 35
When lull'd by summer gales to silver sleep,
Would rather far the tempest's fury brave,
When danger rides on ev'ry foaming wave.

Let Ombre then amuse the sons of Spain,
And still Piquette the Frenchman's game remain ;
Let Brag be left to Newgate's brazen crew, 41
To children Commerce, and to footmen Loo ;
While ev'ry Briton, who to manly sense,
To taste, or breeding has the least pretence,
His sportive hours to Whist alone confines, 45
And other pastimes all for this resigns.

How oft with indignation have I seen
The tables set two tasteless fools between ;
Who, tho' in all the rational delight
Of peaceful Whist they could have pass'd the night ; 50
Yet

Yet (strange to tell!) preferr'd Backgammon's noise,
 Its artless efforts, and its slender joys;
 And fate them down, their stupid skill to try,
 * Regardless of the pair that waited by,
 Left to the sport of betting who should win, 55
 And list'ning to the dice's rattling din;
 Or, should that pastime not amuse them long,
 To yawn, to barter snuff, or hum a song.

* A similar picture of negligent impoliteness, and a similar instance of depravity of taste (substituting only Piquette for Backgammon), occurs at the end of the first chapter of Mrs. Smith's new novel, the *Recluse of the Lake*: "Miss Newenden and Davenant then sat down to Piquette; and Sir Edward and Ethelinde were left to entertain each other with a book, or such conversation as the occurrences or remarks of the day afforded them."

But I would not advise any future Bishop, who may think proper to write upon the *Marks of Imitation*, to produce as an example this acknowledged resemblance; as the author of this poem is ready to make oath, before any *critical* court in Christendom, that the lines upon Backgammon are entirely original; and that it was nearly four months after they were written, before he knew that Ethelinde had a being.

Long

CANTO VI.

79

Long has the muse essay'd her voice to raise,
 And reach the height of Whist's transcendent praise;
 And yet the subject must not be resign'd, 61
 While much its proudest boast remains behind—
 A boast surpassing far each rival dow'r,
 The boast of pleasure's independent pow'r;
 Whilst all the games that for precedence strive 65
 From avarice alone their charms derive.
 For who is he, without an ample stake,
 To play Piquette could e'er the trouble take,
 Tho' sure, each other *deal*, *repique* to find,
 Or with a humbler *pique*, *capot* conjoin'd? 70
 And at Quadrille, how careless and how cool,
 Without the prospect of a tempting *pool*,
 Would ev'n the man remain, whose brilliant hand
 Could still *sansprendre*, or the *vole* command!
 But he whom Whist's bewitching spirit fires, 75
 From mercenary hopes no aid requires;
 But sits with patience, night succeeding night,
 And deals the cards with ever new delight;

(Tho'

WHIST:

80

(Tho' barren conquest no reward can claim,

And only differs from defeat in name)

80

Blest in the pow'r his victories to tell,

And in the conscious pride of playing well.

Seems it not clear, from what has just been said,

That all professors of the rhyming trade,

Whose pockets now (whatever else they hold) 85

Are seldom loaded with a weight of gold,

And who for pastime rarely much can pay,

At independent Whist should learn to play ;

And grateful still each fair occasion seize,

To celebrate with zeal its pow'r to please ? 90

And yet that bard, whose sweet descriptive tongue

With such applause the varying seasons sung,

Has dar'd with Scottish rancour to defame,

* And tax as dull, this animated game.

* To cheat the thirsty moments, Whist awhile
Walks his dull round, beneath a cloud of smoke,
Wreath'd, fragrant from the pipe.

THOMSON'S AUTUMN, 524.

This

CANTO VI.

81

This one rash word has all his fame defac'd, 95
 And robb'd his muse of ev'ry claim to taste.

And thus can Whift, with pleasure's richest dow'r,
 Conjoin the boast of economic pow'r—

No single boast; but one whose skilful use,
 At times, in various ways, can thrift produce. 100
 And now let all who hold their money dear,
 Lend to my frugal tale a serious ear.

Cardelia at the age of forty-one
 Was left a widow by her honest man;
 Who long, in fondness, had indulg'd his dear 105
 * In drums, and routs, and such expensive gear, }
 Beyond the rate his income well could bear.
 But when th' uxorious fool his life resign'd,
 The cruel income would not stay behind.
 So faithful to the husband all his life, 110
 'Twas surely shabby to desert the wife,

* But mice, and rats, and such small gear.

SHAKESPEAR'S LEAR, Act 3, Sc. 7.

F

At

At such a time, when all was dark around,
 And hope or comfort nowhere to be found ;
 And well it knew, the vile malicious thing,
 That it alone could solid comfort bring. 115

Misfortunes here come always in a train :
 Two such at once what mortal could sustain ?

“ Alas !” she cried, in hopeless sorrow lost,
 “ Was ever woman thus by Fortune cross’d ?
 “ To wed a husband who could please his wife, 120

“ And make her happy—only all his life !
 “ How blest is she, to whom her wealthy mate,

“ Whenever summon’d by the call of fate,
 “ The pangs of separation to relieve,
 “ Some solid tokens of his love can leave ! 125

“ To her perhaps devolves, in full command,
 “ Some livelong property of jointure land ;

“ Where thro’ the gloom of many a shady grove

“ The pensive mourner may securely rove ;

“ And where her eye, when spent with wasting grief,

“ From many a verdant lawn may find relief. 131

CANTO VI.

83

" But my ambition would not soar so high ;
 " Far less to me would happiness supply ;
 " Whose sober wishes ask from fate no more,
 " Than just to live as I have liv'd before ; 135
 " And still at times my social band invite,
 " To pass in charming Whist the tedious night,
 " And when the business of the night was past,
 " Repay their presence with a slight repast.
 " But hopes like these, tho' humble in their kind, 140
 " Must now, alas ! for ever be resign'd ;
 " Since Fate's malignant pow'r my life pursues,
 " And dooms the sad alternative to choose—
 " At home no more my fav'rite game to play,
 " Or send my party supperless away." 145

In deep despondence sunk, thus long she lay,
 Till hope at last reveal'd a glimpse of day,
 And touch'd her fancy with his golden ray :
 Some friendly pow'r dispell'd the mist of fear,
 And kindly whisper'd in her drooping ear 150

The salutary truth—that womankind,
 By all the malice of their fates combin'd,
 Of Fortune's gifts could ne'er be quite bereft,
 While art or ingenuity was left.
 'Twas now the question, how she should behave, 155
 To keep her party, and her supper save.
 In this research her waking hours were spent,
 And all her eager dreams on this were bent.
 At last she found it; for a woman's brain,
 That sought devices, never sought in vain. 160

Transported now, her cards again she sends
 To all the circle of her gaming friends;
 Where courtly words, arrang'd in order due,
 Invited still to Whist, and supper too.
 They come, obedient to the welcome call, 165
 And, compliments dispatch'd, to bus'ness fall.
 Successive *rubbers* lengthen'd out the night,
 And still the supper was not ready quite.
 Till tir'd at last with one accord they rise,
 With aching heads, and sleep-desiring eyes. 170

And

And now th' astonish'd lady strives in vain
 Her guests a little longer to detain;
 In vain regrets her good provision lost,
 And somewhat mentions of a tedious roast;
 While each, politely hurrying down the stairs, 175
 A total want of appetite declares.

Thus far success her vent'rous scheme had crown'd,
 And art's fair laurels wreath'd her temples round;
 And yet she fear'd that, were she still to use
 The same contrivance, and the same excuse, 180 }
 They might at last the fruitless call refuse.

But those whom cards with genuine passion fire
 Can still with ease suppress each low desire;
 And ev'n submit (to be indulg'd in play)
 To fast, or, what were harder still, to pray: 185
 And thus, regardless of her sober cheer,
 True to the hour, Cardelia's guests appear.
 For many a night the self-same farce was play'd;
 Some cross event the banquet still delay'd;

And still the lazy cook, tho' warn'd before, 190
 The blame of all, with little justice, bore;
 Who would indeed have mighty wonders done,
 Could she have finish'd what was ne'er begun.
 But all was manag'd with so much address,
 That none appear'd the humbling truth to guefs; 195
 Or, if they did, would not the fraud proclaim,
 As supper was not that for which they came.

Long might she thus have shewn superior sense,
 By keeping company without expence,
 Had not a member of her gaming band 200
 Yielded to give a baronet her hand;
 And eager to display her sov'reign pow'r,
 Brought her new husband in an evil hour
 For poor Cardelia.—Well the widow knew
 Sir John Gormaw had come with grosser view 205
 Than did the rest: and, tho' he thought that play
 Did well enough to pass the night away,
 Was not the man to run so great a risque,
 As lose a supper for a game at *Whisk*.

But

CANTO VI.

87

But still she hop'd, whatever he might feel, 210
 He would at least his discontent conceal;
 Nor singly dare, in such a public way,
 His vile disgraceful passion to display;
 Or, finding nothing could be got to eat,
 He would at worst his visit ne'er repeat. 215

They came as usual at the hour of seven,
 And all went smoothly on till near eleven;
 When at the table where Cardelia sat,
 Against the bridal pair in keen debate,
 The well-fought *rubber* happen'd to be done, 220
 And straight another was of course begun—
 A step not greatly to Sir John's content,
 Whose mind was now on other objects bent;
 Who thought, whate'er the friends of Whist might
 say,

That knife and fork was much superior play; 225
 And would at such an hour have rather seen
 One board in white, than six array'd in green:

F 4

And

And yet, tho' such ideas fill'd his mind,
 He still could keep them to himself confin'd.
 But when at last he saw the *rubber* o'er, 230
 And matters standing as they stood before,
 He thought it could not be a mighty crime,
 Were he to hint that it was supper time.
 To this was straight a ready answer made,
 That one more *rubber* might with ease be play'd: 235
 And poor Gormaw, tho' sore against his will,
 Was forc'd, instead of rising, to sit still.
 But that he did it with an aukward grace,
 Appear'd too plainly from his troubled face ;
 Where discontent in ev'ry feature frown'd, 240
 And hungry fury lour'd on all around.
 But time on ev'ry grief an end bestows,
 And brought at length this *rubber* to a close ;
 And then indeed he deem'd relief was near,
 And vow'd in secret that the lady's cheer 245
 Thro' each successive dish should richly p
 For such absurd, such barbarous delay.

Yet

Yet vain the hope ; for, to his sad surprise,
The thoughtless widow still forgot to rise.
But when she took the cards again to deal, 250
The knight no longer could his soul conceal :
The fierce impatience of his craving maw
Forgot politeness, decency, and awe ;
And, starting from his seat, he roundly swore
He could not supper want one moment more ; 255
Resolv'd that instant to descend, and know
What curst reason made the cook so slow ;
And rather than the thing should longer stand,
That he himself would lend a helping hand.
Cardelia then, with visage pale as death, 260
While gasping terror almost stopt her breath :
“ Dear sir—you must not, cannot think to go ;—
“ Be seated, sir—the maid will let us know.”
Nor did his lady fail her aid to join,
And caught his sleeve to stop his strange design : 265
“ Oh fie ! Sir John ; could you so vulgar be ?
“ Demean your dignity to that degree ?”

But

But all unmov'd Sir John their efforts bore,
 Broke from them both, and hurried to the door.
 As down the steps with eager haste he goes, 270
 No fav'ry scent regales his gaping nose ;
 No merry jack, still whirling round and round,
 Salutes his ear with banquet-boding sound.
 But when at last the kitchen door he gains,
 Surprise and horror thrill his shiv'ring veins : 275
 Nought there one sign of preparation gave,
 But all was dark, and quiet as the grave ;
 Save what the glimm'ring moon reveal'd to view,
 Which thro' the panes a faintish lustre threw,
 And shew'd the drowsy, long-expecting maid, 280
 Half naked, nodding by the fire decay'd ;
 Where scatter'd embers feelingly declare
 That one poor egg could scarce be roasted there.
 As when some youth of firm and constant mind,
 Who long in climes remote had absent pin'd ; 285
 And, after many a year of toil and care,
 Returns impatient to review the fair,

Whom

CANTO VI.

91

Whom still he fondly hopes to find the same
 Fresh blooming object of his youthful flame;
 But sees, alas! that time's relentless pow'r 290
 Has chang'd the blossom to a faded flow'r;
 For radiant locks, that wav'd in ringlets gay,
 Sees rugged tresses verging fast to gray;
 For eyes, whose glance illumin'd all around,
 Dull lifeless lamps, in wat'ry dimness drown'd; 295
 For cheeks, which glow'd with beauty's rosy pride,
 A wan complexion, and a shrivell'd hide—
 One tender word he scarce has pow'r to say,
 But turns with horror from the sight away.
 His back Gormaw with equal horror turn'd; 300
 With equal grief his disappointment mourn'd,
 And muttering curses to the room return'd.

Cardelia there had sunk into a chair,
 In speechless agony, and blank despair;
 On whom, the moment that she struck his view, 305
 A stern, indignant, furious glance he threw;

Nor

Nor deign'd to speak, but with his angry eyes,

While thus impatient to his wife he cries :

“ Come, come, my lady, let us haste away,

‘ Nor longer in this house of famine stay; 310

“ In some cold vault, with dust and darkness lin’d,

“ We might as well a supper hope to find.

“ ’Tis all a curfed, vile, infernal plan ;

“ But henceforth let her cheat us if she can.”

Thus all came out ; and with a gen’ral sneer 315

They thank’d their hostess for her princely cheer ;

Then hurried off, and left the dame behind,

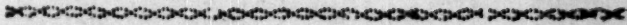
Not in the most contented frame of mind.

She curs’d Gormaw ; she fainted, rag’d, and cried ;

Nay, some will go so far to say she died 320

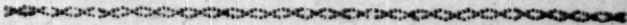
(It hurt her vanity to that degree) :

And if she did — why so she might for me.



W H I S T.

CANTO VII.



ARGUMENT.

Apparent facility, and real difficulty of Whist.—Memory, Judgment, and Temper the three principal requisites. Memory divided into four degrees : 1. Memory of the suits ; 2. of the honours ; 3. of the small trumps ; and 4. of the small cards.—Reasons for rejecting artificial memory.—Wonderful memory of an old man.

Memoria ————— excolendo ————— augetur.

QUINTILIAN.

THIS curious game when first a novice tries,
He wonders where its difficulty lies :
The cards are all arrang'd in order due,
And its peculiar phrases are but few :
Not like those terms which might a volume fill, 5
The jargon of Piquette, or cramp Quadrille ;
Where *point* and *sequence*, *tierces* and *quatorze*,
Spadille, *manillio*, *basto*, *matadores*,
And twenty more exotic words combin'd
Perplex the ear, and stupify the mind. 10
But honest Whist, with native graces crown'd,
Disdains the foppery of foreign sound ;
And for a thousand rules prescribes but one,
To make of ev'ry card the most you can.

But

But let such poor, such shallow reas'ners know, 15
 What seems the easiest is not always so :
 Whene'er the trial comes, they soon shall find
 That their ideas must be much refin'd,
 And many a maxim sink into their mind,
 Ere from their grossest errors they be cur'd, 20
 And play so well as ev'n to be endur'd.
 'Tis thus with Xenophon's and Tully's style,
 As sweet as honey, and as smooth as oil ;
 'Tis thus with Addison, our moral guide,
 And gay Voltaire, the Gallic prose's pride : 25
 Their art without surprise the reader sees,
 And toil and study takes for careless ease ;
 * Perfection's arduous steep he deems a plain,
 And fondly fancies his unpractis'd brain,

* ———— Ut sibi quivis
 Speret idem : fudet multum, frustra que laboret
 Ausus idem. ————

HORACE, IN ARTE POETICA, 240.

Cicero quodam loco scribit, id esse optimum, quod cum ta-
 cile credideris consequi imitatione, non possis.

QUINTILIAN, l. xi. c. i.

Without

CANTO VII.

97

Without research (were he inclin'd to try) 30

Could equal happiness of phrase supply.

The man who wishes well at Whist to play,
To three propitious pow'rs must homage pay :
To Mem'ry first, whose faithful mirror clear
Before our sight bids all the past appear ; 35

To Judgment next, whose lamp's unerring ray
Guides thro' the mazes of the doubtful way ;
To Temper last, whose cool and wholesome breeze
From noxious mists the mind's horizon frees.

Queen of the shadowy past, to thee belong 40

The first exertions of didactic song.

Thine is the magic wand, whose potent sway
Recalls its faded forms in just array.

Each art from thee, divine, historic maid,
And ev'ry science, borrows pow'rful aid ; 45

Nor could that science robb'd of thee subsist,
Which yields to none of all the num'rous list,
The splendid science of delightful Whist.

G.

The

The queen of cities, whose immortal name
 Yet fills the mouth of universal fame, 50
 Imperial Rome (as antiquarians say)
 Was not begun and finish'd in a day.
 And well we know that there was once a time,
 When he who now on learning's height sublime
 Commands Parnassus with despotic sway, 55
 Could scarcely stammer out the letter A.
 Let no one then henceforth presume to say
 That he shall never learn at Whist to play;
 Or think, because his memory is bad,
 That one much better is not to be had. 60
 What sloth must dictate such a poor pretence!
 What shameful want of courage and of sense!
 The sons of hope are heaven's peculiar care;
 Whilst life remains 'tis impious to despair.
 For he who now, with all his pow'rs combin'd, 65
 Can scarce one moment keep the trumps in mind,
 May climb at length perfection's lofty tree,
 And play the game as well as Hoyle, or me.

The

The task at first appears not mighty hard,
 To keep in mind the fate of ev'ry card ; 70
 Since ev'ry card, when play'd with quickness due,
 In two short minutes passes in review ;
 And one should think, that ev'n the weakest brain
 So long with ease might ev'ry trace retain.
 * And yet how few, how very few we see, 75
 That reach in this perfection's last degree !
 Ev'n I, who play so oft the studious game,
 And like it better than I care to name ;
 Ev'n I, bewilder'd in a maze of doubt,
 At times forget how many trumps are out ; 80
 When wayward fancy leads my thoughts astray,
 To love, or verse, or some such idle way.

Is it not then from this example clear,
 That strict attention is the virtue here ?

* ——— Pauci, quos æquus amavit
 Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,
 Dis geniti, potuere.

VIRGIL, *ÆNEID*, vi. 129.

On which alone (whatever sloth pretends) 85
 The whole great art of memory depends :
 From which disjoin'd, the most retentive brain
 That ever nature gave, is giv'n in vain ;
 But which possessing, in a length of days
 The most forgetful may aspire to praise. 90

Let all who sit them down at Whist to play,
 From foreign objects turn their eyes away ;
 And to the verdant board's illumin'd round
 Their fears, their prospects, and their wishes bound.
 Let vulgar cares that instant be resign'd, 95
 And vulgar passions banish'd from the mind :
 There let the cit his golden views forget,
 And the poor bankrupt drop his load of debt :
 There let the bard his rage for rhyming lose,
 And meditate no more the thankless muse : 100
 Let Flavia there her artful plans forsake,
 Nor count the conquests she intends to make :
 Let Harpax there forget th' approaching treat,
 Nor count the dishes he intends to eat:

There

There let the reckless youth, who weds to-morrow,
 And buys his pleasures with an age of sorrow, 106
 From eager thoughts abstract his mental fight,
 And pant no longer for the bridal night :
 There let the hapless youth, who hangs* to-morrow,
 Drop for a while his penitence and sorrow ; 110
 From anxious feelings turn his eyes away,
 And shrink no longer from the public day.

But left in fancy's maze we rove too long,
 To stricter method let us call the song ;
 And since we thus so evidently find 115 }
 That constant practice, with attention join'd,
 Will strengthen by degrees the weakest mind, }
 Proceed we now to shew by what degrees
 The progress may be made with greatest ease.

* ————— It goth by destenye
 To hange or wed ; both hath one houre ;
 And whether it be, I am well sure
 Hangynge is better of the twayne ;
 Sooner done, and shorter payne.

SCOLE HOWSE, 1542.

Let each new votary at mem'ry's shrine 120
 His first attention to the *suits* confine,
 In quick succession as they rise to view,
 And paint the board with red or fable hue.
 Let him observe from whom they first proceed,
 And mark the fate of each peculiar lead ; 125
 If royal cards by vulgar trumps be won,
 And by what hand the daring deed was done :
 So shall he still those adverse suits avoid,
 Which give advantage to the hostile side ;
 So shall he still discern his partner's mind, 130
 And seldom fail his strength at home to find ;
 So shall he ne'er, at some oblivious time,
 Be charg'd with that unpardonable crime,
 Which Passion's eye with darkest fury views,
 And Patience ev'n herself can scarce excuse— 135
 The crime of sending to the hostile shore
 The same unlucky bark that split before ;
 Or, when he sees his friend a suit refuse,
 Of failing to assist his cruel views.

So

So much for lesson first ; whose height to gain
Is scarce-too arduous for an infant brain ; 141
And yet infallible in which to be
Confers in mem'ry's school no mean degree ;
But one with which full many rest content,
Who half their stupid lives at Whist have spent. 145

But let not this with pride inflame your mind :
Think only what a task remains behind ;
See from the pack how each peculiar card
Impatient starts, and claims your next regard ;
In number equal to the weeks, that here 150
In rings of Jewish work divide the year.

When first a student (whether old or young)
Sees in a Lexicon* some foreign tongue,
So many words to ev'ry letter fall,
He thinks no mem'ry can contain them all. 155
But when that regular and rigid maid,
Pedantic Grammar, lends her pow'rful aid,

* Lexicon, a poetical phrase for a dictionary.

And from the mafs of words affigns to each
 Its proper rank among the parts of fpeech ;
 With eager joy he then his error fees, 160
 And learning's lofty ladder mounts with eafe.
 And thus at Whift the party-colour'd crew,
 Which ftrikes with fuch defpair the hafty view,
 In mem'ry's eye will lefs terrific be,
 By skill divided into fquadrons three ; 165
 Where *honours* firft, then *vulgar trumps* appear,
 And bafe *plebeian cards* bring up the rear.

And firft, the band of honour'd chiefs appears,
 In number equal to the Scottifh peers ;
 Who not, like ours, from an illuftrious race 170
 In Britain's fenate take their deftin'd place ;
 But, like the meanef of the burgher train,
 By vile dependent votes their feats obtain.

O'er cards like thefe to fix her firm command,
 Will not from mem'ry much of toil demand ; 175
 So much their gaudy forms attraft the view,
 And fuch effects their pow'rful fteps purfue.

This

CANTO VII.

105

This point obtain'd, you need no farther go,
Of ev'ry suit the reigning pow'rs to know;
And whether those yourself have kept in store 180
Are still as feeble as they were before;
Or if they now can march, in bold array,
Triumphant forth, and sweep the tricks away.
Ne'er shall you then a guarded monarch send,
From some fell ace to meet his fruitless end; 185
Nor, when in rank of play you second stand,
Permit a guarded queen to quit your hand,
Till summon'd by the third, concluding round,
Or till both ace and king their fates have found.

Now to the *vulgar trumps*, in number nine, 190
Our whole attention let us next confine;
That so with certainty we still may know
How far in strength we overmatch the foe;
And ne'er permit him, when our hand is in,
With an inferior trump a trick to win. 195
But should we find, when we have drawn the rest,
That our poor trump is but the second-best,

So

So shall we still the first occasion take
Of such a trembling card a trick to make.

But some, who think of Whist they something
know, 200

Will here refuse another step to go ;
And now to mem'ry's voice attend no more,
Since here her *useful* lessons all are o'er ;
And that uncommon reach of ample mind,
Where all the *vulgar cards* a station find, 205
Down from the ten inclusive to the deuce,
But very seldom will be found of use.

But those that entertain such narrow views,
Must here the freedom of my speech excuse,
If I assert (whatever skill they claim) 210

They are as yet but pupils in the game ;
For no good player deems the smallest card
That meets the board unworthy his regard ;
Since well he knows that ev'n the paltry deuce,
By art and judgment, may be turn'd to use. 215

Nor

Nor is there in the whole extent of play
A brighter gleam of rapture's golden ray,
Than his, whom Whist with genuine spirit fires,
Whene'er in this he gains his full desires ;
When in the harmless house no trumps remain, 220
Or none at least that will his course restrain ;
And forth he pours, with exultation mute,
The weakest children of his darling suit ;
And from the foes, who scarce their temper keep,
Continues still the careless tricks to sweep ; 225
Till ev'ry card be spent ; and, last of all,
In vain reserv'd, their useless honours fall.
One trick, when seiz'd in this triumphant style,
Rewards with more delight the player's toil,
And is by him with far more joy survey'd, 230
Than half a score by kings and aces made.

When these *plebeian cards* together join,
They make three times the sacred number nine ;
But think not therefore their extent to gain,
A task too arduous for a common brain. 235

Division here again his aid will lend,
 And make your steps with gradual ease descend,
 Or (if you better like the phrase) ascend. }
 Three stately tens the long procession lead ;
 Nines, eights, and sev'ns, and fixes next succeed ; 240
 Then fives, and fours, and trays ; till frequent use
 At last acquaint you with the humble deuce ;
 Which, tho' the meanest of the painted train,
 Is here the pinnacle of mem'ry's fane.

But ere from mem'ry's school we set you free, 245
 Two more important points must mention'd be ;
 Which some, who are in skill surpass'd by few,
 At times will suffer to escape their view :
 The point of knowing, when the hand is o'er,
 How many *honours* either side can score ; 250
 And that which gives to mem'ry's full command
 The royal cards turn'd up on either hand :
 'Twere loss of time the former's use to tell,
 Nor on the latter need we long to dwell ;

Since

CANTO VII.

109

Since all will grant, in ev'ry common case, 255
To play were madness in an *honour's* face ;
And that to lead thro' trumps of high degree,
The first of duties must for ever be.

But some will wonder, that, tho' here the muse
On mem'ry's chapter has been thus diffuse, 260
She has not yet the slightest mention made
Of that contrivance to afford her aid,
Her load to lighten, and abridge her toil,
Found by the genius of immortal Hoyle* ;
By which arrangement's artful methods try 265
The want of recollection to supply ;
And each event that passes on the board
Engage by diff'rent symbols to record.
But I must venture here to quit my guide,
And, urg'd by reason, for myself decide, 270

* See Hoyle, chap. xxi. intitled, *An Artificial Memory, or an Easy Method of assisting the Memory of those that play at the Game of Whist*

Whose

Whose faithful voice, by mighty names unfway'd,
 Condemns the impotence of foreign aid;
 And loudly calls on ev'ry manly mind,
 Its best resources in itself to find.

Oh, be not then, ye pupils of my muse, 275
 Induc'd by sloth such dang'rous aids to use:
 Seek not on bladders weak as these to fail,
 Whose false assurance must so often fail;
 But plunge with boldness in, all help disown,
 And to your native vigour trust alone; 280
 When persevering labour's years are past,
 Secure to reach perfection's port at last.

* A man of burgher blood I chanc'd to know,
 Whose head was white with fourscore winters' snow;
 His frame was weaken'd by the weight of years, 285
 And blunting deafness had assail'd his ears;

* I chanc'd an old Corycian swain to know.

DRYDEN'S GEORGICS, iv. 188.

Namque sub Oebalæ memini me turribus altis,
 Quæ niger humectat flaventia culta Galeus,
 Corycium vidisse senem.

VIRGIL, GEORG. iv. 125.

But

But still with keenest glance his eagle eye
Could all that pass'd upon the board descry ;
And daily practice, and incessant thought,
Had mem'ry's pow'r to such perfection brought, 290
That not a deuce from any quarter fell,
But he thro' all the hand its fate could tell.

Accept, thou hoary sage, this feeble praise,
Which now to thee thy grateful pupil pays:

If he of skill can boast a decent share, 295

And plays his cards with tolerable care,
Be all the glory thine, whose precepts kind

Enlarg'd his knowledge, and his views refin'd ;

And whose example first his spirit fir'd,

And emulation's ardour first inspir'd ; 300

Who taught him first (whate'er the pedant says)

That skill at Whist confers no vulgar praise ;

And that the man who could not play it well

(Howe'er he might in other arts excel) 304 }

To each politer scene must bid at once farewell.

As there are many people who are fonder of Truth when she appears in the humble simplicity of prose, than when she is decked out in the trappings of poetry, the author thought it might not be amiss, at the end of this and the two following cantos (which are the only didactic parts of the work), to subjoin the principal maxims they contain, in the sober habiliment of prosaic plainness. The Appendix to the eighth and ninth cantos will naturally fall into the form of a commentary: but the present, being but half didactic, will only supply a few practical axioms.

I. Never return the adversaries' lead. v. 128.—An exception to this rule you will find in Canto IX. 66.

II. Always return your partner's lead. v. 130.

III. Never lead to the adversaries' *ruff*. v. 136.

IV. Always return your partner's *ruff*, when you see that he plays for it. v. 138.—See Canto IX. v. 52.

V. When you know that you hold the best of two trumps, never fail to draw the other. v. 194.

VI. But when you know that yours is the worst, never lose an opportunity of trumping with it. v. 196.

VII. Never play in the face of an *honour*. v. 256.

VIII. Always play through an *honour*. v. 257.

ARGUMENT.

Judgment, the second requisite at Whist.—Rules under this head almost innumerable.—First, of the duties of the leading hand.—Doctrine of trumps, and of the strong suit.

Me atrevo á dar Preceptos.

LOPE DE VEGA.

BUT much as Whift on mem'ry's pow'r depends,
You must not think that there the labour ends;
For were it thus, the man who knew it most
Could but the merit of a school-boy boast.
A far superior pow'r his aid must join, 5
And make the charming science quite divine;
Unerring Judgment, whose supreme command
In ev'ry nicer case directs the hand.
But here so wide a prospect meets the sight,
That ev'n my daring muse recoils with fright: 10
So many points for her attention call,
She knows she never can dispatch them all.
As well might she attempt to reckon o'er
Each grain of sand on Ocean's sounding shore,

Each flow'r whose beauty paints the vernal ground,
 Each star that glitters in the azure round; 16
 Or, dyed in glossy jet, each filken thread,
 Whose rich profusion decks my charmer's head.
 For this good cause it is her sage design
 To some few rules her lessons to confine; 20
 Whose great importance is by all confess'd,
 And then to time and practice leave the rest.

The various duties of each diff'rent hand,
 Arrang'd in order as at first they stand,
 Or as they shift about in course of play, 25
 The skilful verse shall now at large display.

On him, who, seated by the Dealer's side,
 Enjoys his privilege with conscious pride,
 First from the barrier's bound to start away,
 And open to the rest the lifts of play— 30
 On him all eyes with fixt attention wait,
 And trembling hope to see the birth of fate.

A youth just ent'ring on the stage of life,
 And keen to struggle in preferment's strife,

By

CANTO VIII.

117

By one rash step may hurt his fortune more 35

Than all his future prudence can restore.

Thus will it fare with him whose want of heed

Sets off at first with some imprudent lead;

His influence lost he never may regain,

But oft his oversight lament in vain; 40

Whose dire effect may give the foe command,

And spoil the prospects of the fairest hand.

Stop then, my son, and, ere thy card descend,

Reflect how much may on its fate depend;

Nor venture thus, by rash and wanton play, 45

The hopes of two at once to cast away.

First then, with careful eye your force review,

And range the various *suits* in order due;

Consider next, amid the painted throng,

If your appointed band of trumps be strong; 50

Since to begin with them, whene'er you can,

Is (tho' the boldest) still the safest plan;

For nought can here such want of skill betray,

Or give such evidence of wretched play,

As when of trumps you hold a decent share, 55
 To keep them prison'd up with cow'rdly care,
 Till they at last their forc'd appearance make,
 At times constrain'd your partner's *tricks* to take.

Some ask why women here so oft go wrong,
 And like to keep them in their hands so long? 60
 To me the cause of this was always plain;
 They love to keep th' authority they gain.

When first in quest of trumps you search your
 hand,
 Should five, or more than five, in waiting stand,
 Oh, do not then one precious moment lose, 65
 To draw the rest their envied pow'r to use.
 What tho' your other cards are all so poor
 That they one single trick can scarce ensure;
 Remember still (nor keep, with selfish mind,
 Your whole attention to yourself confin'd) 70
 How much your sending thus the trumps away
 May chance to benefit your partner's play;

Remember

Remember too, the weaker you may be,
For strength of cards the greater chance has he.

But if, turn'd up, a trump of high command 75
In threat'ning attitude against you stand,
You then had better change your mode of play,
And (for a time at least) the trumps delay.
Until your partner chance the lead to gain,
With patience wait—nor shall you wait in vain; 80
For he who trumps can lead with greater ease,
Will sure for that the first occasion seize,
While you behind the foe secure remain,
And thus your point with less of danger gain.

But now perhaps of trumps you hold but four,
And yet of cards can boast a decent store; 86
If with these cards you *tricks* intend to win,
Prevent renounces, and with trumps begin.
And yet from less than four you must not lead,
Unless your hand of cards be great indeed. 90

But here observe, that should your trumps be three,
And each of these an *honour* chance to be;

Knave, queen, and king ; or king, with queen and
ace ;

It will be then a very diff'rent case ;

For cards like these, of such supreme command, 95

You ne'er should keep one moment in your hand ;

But send them forth the meaner troops to draw,

To sweep the board, and keep the world in awe.

But knave and queen, when with an ace conjoin'd,

Will thrive much better when at home confin'd, 100

For reasons good ; which if you wish to know,

Attempt to guess, or seek them out below*.

But when your hand for its appointed share

Of pow'rful trumps receives a royal pair,

Your play will then demand peculiar care : 105

Since this, when all the diff'rent pairs you take,

No less than six varieties will make ;

From three of which you ne'er should fail to lead,

Tho' some than others better will succeed ;

* See below, at verse 231.

Ace, king the best; then king with queen conjoin'd,
While queen and knave must follow far behind. 111

And yet this pair a better chance will have,
Than knave with king, or ev'n than ace and knave.
But (far the worst of all the royal band)

Allow not ace and queen to quit your hand. 115
On this, however, at another time

* We mean to lavish greater length of rhyme.

Whene'er of honour'd chiefs you hold but one,
To fend him forth is still the safest plan.

Let then your ace, of trumps dispatch a round; 120
For him no better use could e'er be found.

And ev'n the other chiefs, of less degree,
Will thus by far of more advantage be;

While from the foe they force supreme command,
And serve to strengthen too your partner's hand. 125

But should your luckless hand still weaker be,
And hold but one poor trump of low degree,

* See below, at verse 231.

With which you mark but little chance to *ruff*,
 To play it out may oft do well enough ;
 For then your partner will the lead return, 130
 And thus to good account your weakness turn ;
 While he pursues your but-commencing plan,
 And takes at ev'ry round two trumps for one.
 But this, altho' at times it should be done,
 At other times 'twere better far to shun ; 135
 For you may judge it will not always do,
 So soon your weakness to expose to view.

For making trumps the first commencing round
 Another reason good may still be found ;
 Which, tho' but half deriv'd from Judgment's school,
 Has yet the force of universal rule ; 141
 That when you know not well what else to play,
 To lead from trumps is still the safest way ;
 As that great suit (howe'er it chance to fall)
 Can hurt your partner's hand the least of all. 145
 So much for trumps—whose doctrine to explain,
 With more than common labour racks the brain :

But

But which to know, professors all agree
The most important point at Whist to be.

But when from trumps debarr'd, without dispute,
The next best lead is from the strongest suit ; 151
Not from that suit which highest cards can boast,
But still from that whose number counts the most.

And here the player of supreme degree
Will from the novice best distinguish'd be ; 155
Who early *tricks* is anxious still to take,
And ev'ry king and ace at first to make ;
As if the cards which once dominion gain,
The same superior pow'r could not retain.

But he who plays with more extensive views, 160
A widely diff'rent course from this pursues ;
And strives of ev'ry suit within his hand
As long as possible to keep command.

From four, and five, and six, and deuce, and tray,
Will he much rather than from *honours* play : 165
For these, tho' now so weak and poor they be,
He hopes in time of greater force to see :

But

But cautious still, he wishes first to know
 Of this best suit what cards his friend can shew;
 Whose strength if there he likewise find to lie, 170
 To draw the trumps he boldly means to try,
 That when at last their suit's opposers fall,
 Without disturbance they may make them all.

But from the strongest suit if thus to lead,
 Can only from superior skill proceed, 175
 What words will serve our censure to convey
 Of those who always from their weakest play!
 Who, when of any suit they hold but one,
 With stupid rapture hug the darling plan,
 That one immediate from their hand to spurn, 180
 And eager wait to trump its next return!
 What folly must inspire the wretched taste,
 So many precious trumps on *ruffs* to waste!
 With what fell weapons of indignant rage
 Shall I this vile, pernicious pow'r engage, 185
 Which leads so far from judgment's paths astray,
 And combats ev'ry rule of wholesome play?

Not

Not for this purpose has indulgent Heav'n
 Such strength of trumps to favour'd mortals giv'n :
 That very trump you madly cast away, 190
 Might have in time obtain'd imperial sway ;
 From all offence your better suits secur'd,
 And three good *tricks* besides its own procur'd
 But should your fortune be so very low,
 That *ruffs* are all the hope your hand can shew, 195
 Remember still that it is dang'rous play,
 Thus at the first your weakness to betray ;
 And tho' a *ruff* would suit your luckless state,
 At least with patience for its coming wait ;
 Nor be like those who still impatient sit, 200
 To wound their comrades with the darts of wit ;
 While wit that lacks occasion's fair excuse,
 Must much of force, and much of beauty lose.

If no strong suit, on which your hopes to place,
 Your fate affords, in that unlucky case, 205
 The next best lead is from a king and ace.

But

But if my counsel you will here obey,
 I would not have you both at once to play ;—
 Make but one step—no farther then proceed,
 But try your partner on another lead : 210
 So shall you keep the suit's command ; and so
 Your friend instructed shall hereafter know
 In what good quarter sits your fairest wind,
 And still be sure your strength at home to find.

Next to the suit, where ace and king are join'd,
 The suits of each apart you best will find ; 216
 For if you here with some small card begin,
 Your partner's queen may chance a *trick* to win ;
 But if one card alone your king defend,
 Be ne'er induc'd that card abroad to send ; 220
 For very seldom will the ace be found
 To leave his palace the commencing round.

From king and queen is but a forry lead,
 And will be found but seldom to succeed ;
 For both conjoin'd, if either first advance, 225
 To make two *tricks* have but a slender chance ;

And,

And, if you sport a card of low degree,
The knave will probably the gainer be.

To lead from knave and ace, or king and knave,
I hope you seldom shall occasion have. 230

But when a queen attends an ace's side,
That worst of all the suits with care avoid ;
At least till fate a better lead refuse,
And of two evils force the least to choose.

And thus to wait you must not reckon hard, 235
Since patience here will be its own reward ;

For if upon the left that suit begin,
Then both your ace and queen are sure to win :
But should your friend, or on the right your foe,
Attempt that suit, then on your queen must go ; 240

Ev'n then you have the chance of two to one,
To make them both by this advent'rous plan.

I told you once, as you remember may,

* Of trumps a single *honour* still to play ;

* See above, at verse 118.

Let it be knave, or queen, or king, or ace ; 245

But other suits make quite a diff'rent case :

To keep them up is here the better plan ;

A single ace will still command the clan ;

And ev'n the rest, if they in hand remain,

Have still some slender chance their *tricks* to gain.

But now the suit is fix'd—what single card 251

Of each to play demands your next regard ;—

An easy point, on which my hasty song

Conceives it needless to detain you long ;

For that the lowest still should first appear, 255

Admits but only one exception here.

Of *sequence*, upwards from the number three,

Be sure to lead the highest in degree ;

Which to your partner, if he bear a brain*,

Will still the nature of your hand explain, 260

And save his better cards from being spent in vain. }

* Nay, I do bear a brain.

SHAKESPEAR'S ROMEO AND JULIET, Act 1, Sc. 4.

CANTO VIII.

129

How blest is he, who can, when elder hand,
With reason hope to gain the game's command ;
Who strength of trumps with joyful eye beholds,
And of each other suit the tenace holds ! 265
He fearless still can with his trumps begin,
Nor cares he much what hand the *trick* may win ;
Secure of this, where'er the lead remain,
That he his former pow'r shall soon regain.

I

COMMEN-

COMMENTARY ON CANTO VIII.

DUTIES OF THE LEADING HAND.

Query 1. What suit to lead ?

Answer. Lead always trumps when you can. v. 51.

DOCTRINE OF TRUMPS. 63 to 145.

Lead always from five or more trumps, however weak your hand of cards may be, unless an honour be turned up against you. 63 to 84.—HOYLE, chap. i. rule 2.

Lead from four trumps with a tolerable hand. 85 to 88.

You must not lead trumps from less than four, unless in the two following cases :

I. If your hand of cards be very great. 90.

II. If your trumps be honours.

Of three honours, lead always from ace, king, and queen ; or king, queen, and knave : but not from ace, queen, and knave. v. 91 to 102.

Of two honours, lead always with ace and king, king and queen, and even queen and knave ; but seldom with ace and knave, or king and knave ; and never with ace-queen. v. 103 to 117.

Lead always with a single honour, whatever it be ; which serves to strengthen your partner's hand. v. 118 to 125.

Leading with a single small trump, with which you have no chance of ruffing, will not unfrequently be found eligible ; as it
has

has the effect, when returned, of drawing two for one. The chief objection is, that it exposes rather too soon the weakness of your hand. 126 to 137.

There is still another reason for leading trumps; when you have no other good suit; trumps being always the least dangerous lead. 138 to 145.

DOCTRINE OF THE STRONG SUIT. 150 to 204.

The next eligible lead to trumps, is your strongest suit; not that of which you have the best, but that of which you have the most cards. Bad players are anxious to make their great cards at first, as if they would not be good at any time. Good ones, on the contrary, wish to keep the command of a suit as long as they possibly can. By playing from your strongest suit, you have always the chance of making a trick or two on it at the end of the hand; and you discover, at the same time, how your partner stands with regard to it, and whether it will be worth while to play trumps on its account. v. 150 to 173.

But if playing from the strongest suit be thus eligible, how foolish and absurd must be the conduct of those who always chuse to play from the weakest, and who never are happy but when fishing for a ruff! Besides the danger of exposing their weakness, they thus waste those precious trumps, which were intended for a very different purpose. Even if your hand be so low that a ruff is almost your only hope, you should at least wait with patience till it come. 174 to 203.

Next to a strong suit is one with ace and king; but you should stop after playing one of them, and try your partner with another

lead; who will thus know afterwards where to find you at home.
204 to 214.

Next to the suit of ace and king together, is that in which they are each apart. By leading a small card from either, your partner has a chance of making the queen if he has her. But if your king be but once guarded, avoid that as a very dangerous lead.
215 to 222.

King and queen is but a bad lead; for if you begin with either of them, you may chance to make but one trick of the suit; and if you lead a small one, you will most probably give one to the knave. 223 to 228.

King and knave is also a bad lead. 229-30.

But of all the leads ace and queen is the worst; which therefore should be avoided as long as you can: for if it is led to you from the left hand, you cannot fail to make them both; and even should the suit be begun by either of the other two players, by venturing your queen the first round, your chance for two tricks is not inconsiderable. 231 to 242.

Never lead with a single honour of any suit except trumps; for even a guardless king, queen, or knave, when kept up, have some chance of making a trick. 243 to 250.

Query II. What particular card of the suit to lead?

Answer. In general the lowest; but where you have sequence of three or more, then always begin with the highest.
251 to 261. See HOYLE, chap. xiv.

W H I S T.

CANTO IX.

ARGUMENT.

Judgment continued.—Duties of him who recovers the lead.—Duties of the second in hand. Of the third, including the doctrine of finessing.—Duties of the last in hand.—Doctrine of calling, and of playing by the stages of the game.

Immer weiter komm ich, auf meinem furchtbaren Wege.

KLOPSTOCK.

BUT tho', when once a hand is well begun,
Half of the player's task, and more, is done ;
Yet must he never think of pausing there,
But watch its progress with unceasing care ;
And when his luck obtains the lead anew, 5
His former plans with vigour still pursue.

If trumps to play be first expedient found,
Then let him now dispatch another round ;
And still more keenly urge the daring plan,
When he has hopes of taking two for one. 10
But should in trumps a diff'rent fate prevail,
And not his partner, but his foe should fail,
'Twere better then to change his mode of play,
And (for a time at least) his scheme delay.

But if his hand of cards be great indeed, 15
 At all adventures let him then proceed;
 And, rather than his suits were kept in awe,
 Risque from his friend the last of trumps to draw.
 But when two trumps alone remain behind,
 Should he the highest still against him find, 20
 From his strong suit some potent card to play,
 May chance to force it from the field away.
 And here the same deliv'rance to produce,
 A thirteenth card will oft be found of use.

The lead of trumps was not at first your view, 25
 But some strong suit—then still that suit pursue;
 By which, when doubt and danger's hour is past;
 You oft a *trick* or two may catch at last.

But should you fail in ev'ry darling plan,
 And should your wretched hand afford not one, 30
 Be then content a second part to play,
 And yield entirely to your partner's sway;
 To him alone your whole attention turn,
 And still, whene'er you can, his leads return.

But

CANTO IX.

137

But if he twice has led, nor both the same, 35
 Still let the first* your first observance claim;
 Lest from the next you should receive a bite,
 And find it was involuntary quite.

But more than all, that worst of faults avoid,
 Which ev'n to wrath might move a stoic's pride; 40
 When your friend's eyes with keen impatience
 burn,

From all the house the hostile trumps to turn,
 Instead of trumps, his weakness† to return. }

For the poor torch, that burns at either end,
 To ruin's dreary gulph must soon descend; 45
 And ev'n the strongest hand will soon decay,
 When both constrain'd to trump, and trumps to play.

And yet you must not think at ev'ry time,
 To lead your partner's *ruff*, a mortal crime;

* You are to make a wide difference between a lead of choice
 and a forced lead of your partner's.

HOYLE, chap. xii. art. 3.

† His *weakness*, poetically, for his weak suit.

For I can cases four before you lay, 50
 In all of which it is the best of play.
 When from his conduct you can clearly see
 That such a step will acceptable be :
 Or when yourself a pow'r of trumps can boast,
 And ere your rage attacks the rival host, 55
 Your eyes for him a likely chance survey,
 With one or two of his to steal away :
 Or when you hope (the hope is here enough)
 To treat his malice with an *over-ruff* :
 Or last of all, but highest in degree, 60
 If fortune should so favourable be,
 In both your hands at once a *ruff* to place,
 Fail not the *saw** that instant to embrace ;
 Which you shall still of such advantage find,
 That all your former plans were well resign'd. 65

* Whenever you gain the advantage of establishing of a *saw*, it is your interest to embrace it.

But he whose breast a christian spirit bears
 No more at Whist than other great affairs,
 Will ever choose to keep, with selfish mind,
 His whole attention to his friends confin'd ;
 Since (strange to tell) it may at times succeed, 70
 Ev'n to return your enemies their lead.

When he upon the right too weak is found
 To raise his partner's first commencing round,
 So shall that foe, the lead at first who plann'd,
 Be forc'd at once to quit the suit's command, 75
 Or with an easy *trick* oblige your partner's hand.

And yet this scheme you never ought to try,
 Unless your own no better lead supply ;
 For danger often waits that suit's return,
 And slighted weakness may to malice turn. 80

But having now dispatch'd the elder hand,
 The second's duties next our care demand ;
 Which as they stand, the first commencing round,
 No very arduous task will sure be found ;

Since all the secret then, without dispute, 85
Is but to play the worst of ev'ry suit.

Yet in each gen'ral rule, however plain,
Some few exceptions there must still remain.
If both your hand contain, or king, or ace
Should shew without delay his honest face. 90

Remember too, as you before* were told,
To play your queen, if ace and queen you hold.

Yours is the king, and but one single card
By fate bestow'd the monarch's side to guard :
Let then his royal figure first advance, 95
Which still for safety is his fairest chance ;
Tho' this too often proves a cruel case,
And leads him forth to meet the fatal ace.

Put up, when guarded once, or queen or knave,
For both the fairest chance their lives to save. 100

In all the following rounds, the second hand
Requires from judgment no precise command :

* See above, Canto VIII. 240.

CANTO IX.

141

Or should the pupil ask a certain rule,
We then must send him back to mem'ry's* school.

And yet, before we quite this chapter leave, 105
One useful caution let him first receive :

When any suit, of which his hand is out,
To trump or not to trump he stands in doubt,
If he can cast a losing card away,
To *pass* the *trick* is always better play, 110

(Which still his partner has a chance to gain)
Than *risque* the wasting of his trumps in vain.

Nor think that here too great a length I go,
For one poor trump such anxious care to shew ;
For, were I urg'd some single rule to find, 115
Where Whist's true essence most should meet the
mind,

My maxim should be still in such a case,
A proper value on the trumps to place.

We taught forbearance to the second hand,
But give the third an opposite command ; 120

* See above, Canto VII. 178—189.

And

And recommend to him the daring plan,
 To play at ev'ry round the best he can :
 Unless the cards that meet his judging eye
 Permit his skill the second-best to try ;
 With queen and ace, to venture first the queen, 125
 And risque the royal fire that lies between ;
 With king and knave, to risque the royal dame ;
 With queen and ten, with knave and nine the same.
 Nor need we here much farther down to go,
 Because importance seldom dwells below. 130

Such is the doctrine of finessing's* art ;
 A strong temptation to the daring heart ;
 To which no *tricks* more pleasure can convey,
 Than those obtain'd in this advent'rous way.

* *Finessing*, says Hoyle, means the endeavouring to gain an advantage by art and skill, which consists in this : when a card is led, and you have the best and third-best card of that suit, you judge it best to put your third-best card upon that lead, and run the risque of your adversary's having the second-best of it ; that if he has it not, which is two to one against him, you are then sure of gaining a trick. Chap. xx.

And

CANTO IX.

143

And yet the danger it defies is such, 135

I fear it ought not to be practis'd much ;

Unless of trumps you boast the full command,

Or have already quell'd the hostile band :

And if your plan succeeds, you then could claim

To save your lurch, or reckon up the game. 140

But still remember this, my docile son,

That you in trumps much greater risques may run }
 Than with another suit could well be done :

For trumps will still their native pow'r retain,

Nor can by other trumps be render'd vain. 145

The last in hand has sure the easiest plan ;

Only to catch whatever *tricks* he can.

And yet at times ev'n he might errors make,

And for a paltry *trick* his game forsake,

If, while some trumps against him still remain, 150

His own best trump he thus should waste in vain.

But some will here, I know, with boldness say,

" To pass a *trick* is always wretched play."

And

And yet I will assert, in spite of such,
 That ev'n a *trick* at times may cost too much; 155
 Should it from all restraint the foe relieve,
 Or in your hand a guardless *honour* leave.
 But oh, what words can paint the dire disgrace,
 The shameful crime, of trumping with an ace,
 Until it lose its relative degree, 160
 And chance the sole surviving trump to be!
 As well might George, when he in state appears,
 Enthron'd with splendor in the House of Peers,
 Were some rash knave so daring then to be,
 As make with honourable pockets free; 165
 As well might he, whene'er the fact was known,
 Jump down indignant from his royal throne,
 And seizing by the neck without delay,
 Himself to Newgate haul the wretch away:
 Nor would he thus a stranger figure cut, 170
 Than ace of trumps to such an office put.

Sometimes the person who is last in hand
 Is eager to obtain the lead's command.

That

CANTO IX.

145

55 That he may then pursue some darling plan,
 Which his friend can't, or will not if he can. 175
 'Twere better far than thus to wait in vain,
 To take at once his partner's trick again, }
 To rout the routed, and to slay the slain.

60 Thus have we now dispatch'd the diff'rent hands,
 And Calling's art some notice next demands : 180
 That right which those the point of eight that reach,
 Have still to make invocatory speech ;
 That when the one two honours holds in hand,
 He should aloud his partner's aid demand ;
 65 That so their forces join'd may game supply, 185
 And all the risque of adverse *tricks* defy.

But tho' a game may thus be gain'd with ease,
 The tempting chance you should not always seize ;
 For how must you the disappointment mourn,
 70 Whene'er your question meets with no return ! 190
 How much would such a step your hand expose
 To all the malice of your cruel foes !

K

Let

Let ev'ry player then this pow'r decline,
 Save at the adverse points of four and nine ;
 The one to bar the *trick's* uneven claim, 195
 The other to secure a double game ;
 Unless in Scotia's land he chance to play,
 Where I am told by some, that trav'lers say,
 They have in playing Whist a diff'rent way.
 That when the foes are *love*, or none at all, 200
 To gain a triple game they always *call*.
 That greedy race, who, for the love of gold,
 In days of yore their luckless monarch fold ;
 Who still unchang'd, the same desires obey,
 And ev'n at Whist their avarice betray. 205

Now hear, before you part from Judgment's school,
 The last, but not the least important rule ;
 That still before you dare a card to play,
 You with attention must your score survey ;
 And never fail to regulate your game, 210
 By what the nature of that score may claim.

At

At diff'rent times the same identic hand
 Will diff'rent modes of management demand.
 When first you enter on the doubtful way,
 You then should still with vent'rous courage play;
 Then is the time with boldness to finesse, 216
 And for a greater good to risque a less.
 But when at last you to the goal draw near,
 A very diff'rent course you then should steer;
 By slow but certain steps to conquest creep, 220
 And take no *trick* you are not sure to keep.

And here the price of long laborious years,
 The end of all your toils at last appears.
 You now on fair perfection's summit stand,
 And can with ease the vulgar world command; 225
 Secure of this, that but a very few
 To such a height will e'er your steps pursue.
 For most, enslav'd by sloth's destructive sway,
 Advance no farther than the middle way;
 Nor think, by reaching such exalted praise, 230
 To what a glorious pitch they might their natures
 raise.

Let others still with admiration view
 Pedantic learning's scientific crew ;
 Whose eyes the secrets of the heav'ns explore,
 Or sound the depths of geometric lore ;— 235
 Let them with wonder look on those that reign,
 Or guide the havock of th' embattled plain ;
 On those whose skill directs the helm of state,
 Or sways at will the senate's fierce debate.
 To me, nor study, senate, throne, nor field, 240
 Of man's superior soul such proofs can yield,
 As that dear place, the first in reason's eye,
 Where Whist's professors meet their skill to try ;
 Where order still her strictest pow'r maintains,
 And almost universal silence reigns ; 245
 Where great events on ev'ry moment wait,
 And ev'ry motion is the stamp of fate :
 While Judgment there, thro' each important hour,
 Displays the triumphs of his godlike pow'r ;
 And clearly shews to what a height refin'd, 250
 Attention's force with perseverance join'd,
 Above the vulgar crew can raise the human mind. }

COMMENTARY ON CANTO IX.

DUTIES OF HIM WHO RECOVERS THE LEAD. V. 1—80.

He should push the trumps which he has already begun; especially if he thinks he shall take two for one. The contrary suspicion is the only reason for making him discontinue trumps: but if he has a very great hand of cards, it will then be proper to run all risques; even that of drawing the last trump from his partner. But when there are only two trumps in the house, and he finds that the best is against him, let him force it out with a card of his strong suit; even a thirteenth card is often useful upon such an occasion. V. 7—24.

Next to the duty of pushing trumps, is that of continuing your strong suit; by which you will probably make a trick or two at last. V. 25—28.

But if you find that you cannot accomplish your plan, or if your hand be so poor that you have none to accomplish, you must then be entirely subservient to your partner, and lose no opportunity of returning his leads; but if he has led to you from two suits, be sure to give always the preference to the first, as the other may probably have only been forced. Above all, never lead to his ruff, when you have reason to imagine that he wishes for trumps: but more especially if he has played for them. There are indeed only four cases in which you should lead to your partner's renounce: 1. When you see that he expressly desires it. 2. When

you are very strong in trumps, and wish, before you begin to draw them from the enemy, to give him an opportunity of making one of his. 3. When you think that he has a chance of an over-ruff. And 4. When you can establish between you a see-saw, which is so advantageous, that every other plan should be renounced to embrace it. v. 29—65.

When the right-hand adversary is unable to raise his partner's lead, it will be very proper for you to return it, as it will give your partner an opportunity of making a trick cheaply, or force from your left-hand adversary the command of the suit. This, however, should never be preferred to a good lead, either of your own or your partner's, especially as there is frequently a risque of the right-hand adversary trumping that suit. v. 66—80.

DUTIES OF THE SECOND HAND. v. 81—118.

These at first are a very easy matter, being only playing always the worst of the suit; except, 1. When he has ace and king; in which case one of them must be played. 2. When he has ace and queen; where the queen should be put on. 3. When his king is but once guarded, where he ought always to put him on; as the chance is, that the suit was led from an ace. 4. When either his queen or knave happens to be but once guarded; in which case, putting them up is almost their only chance for a trick. v. 81—100.

When a suit is led, of which he has none, and he is doubtful whether to trump it or not; if he has a losing card to throw away,
it

it will generally be the better play to pass it, especially as there is a chance of its being taken by your partner. v. 105—112.

The most important of all maxims at Whist, is to set a proper value upon the trumps. 113—118.

DUTIES OF THE THIRD HAND. v. 119—145.

The general rule is here the reverse of that of the second hand; being to put on the best of the suit. An exception to this is in the case of finessing, when you hold ace-queen, king-knave, queen-ten, knave-nine, or the like; and put on the lowest of the two cards, in hopes that the intermediate one lies not behind you. The temptation to finessing is very great, and yet it is such a dangerous practice, that it ought but rarely to be ventured, unless when you are very strong in trumps, and have a chance, by gaining the finessed trick, of saving your lurch, or of getting the game. Still, however, you may venture more in trumps than in any of the other suits.

DUTIES OF THE LAST HAND. v. 146—178.

These are in general the easiest of all, being only to take the trick if he can. And yet he should never, for the sake of a trick, part with the best trump in the house, or leave an honour guardless in his hand. But, above all, he should never trump with an ace, unless when it happens to be the last trump. v. 146—171.

It may sometimes be proper to take his partner's trick, when

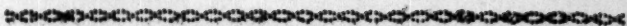
he is very desirous o getting the lead, to execute any particular project, which he suspects that his partner either cannot, or will not humour. v. 172—178.

DOCTRINE OF CALLING,

This is rather a dangerous expedient ; as it runs a risque, if unsuccessful, of exposing the hand ; and ought therefore never to be attempted, unless when the adversaries are at nine, or upon the eve of saving their lurch. v. 179—205.

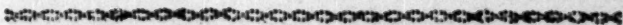
DOCTRINE OF PLAYING BY THE STAGES OF THE GAME. v. 206—221.

At the beginning of the game you should play with boldness ; but when it comes near a close, with caution and forbearance.



W H I S. T.

CANTO X.



ARGUMENT.

Temper, the third requisite at Whist.—Three causes of loss of temper. 1. Bad luck. 2. Cross play. And 3. A bad partner.—Cards, a terrible trial for the temper.—Story of Smilinda and her lover Pufillo.

What do you think it was all about?—It was all about a game of
cards.

MURPHY.

THUS far the muse has urg'd her daring toil,
Beneath the guidance of immortal Hoyle :
But here, alas ! his guardian pow'r is o'er,
His voice shall animate the strain no more ;
Whose efforts now must his protection lose, 5
And for themselves another master choose.

Come, then, thou spirit, whose delightful pow'r
Inspir'd so late, in fancy's fairest hour,
Serena's bard ; and taught his liquid lays
* To reach the splendid heights of Temper's praise ;
Come, then, and pour on me propitious too 11
Some precious drops of inspiration's dew ;

* Hayley, the author of the Triumphs of Temper.

For I can justly now thy favour claim,
 Since now my subject is with his the same :
 That so the muse, by thy assistance strong, 15
 May lead with ease the tuneful stream along,
 And with redoubled vigour close the song. }

In vain has Mem'ry's strength enlarg'd your
 mind, }
 In vain has Judgment's force your skill refin'd,
 Unless a third propitious pow'r be join'd. 20
 For should you not with coolest Temper play,
 You must be always in a losing way ;
 Since passion ruffles and disturbs the mind,
 And makes the keenest judgment weak and blind ;
 Ev'n mem'ry's mirror too, however fair, 25
 It clouds, and scatters all the traces there.

* The storms which ruffle Temper's placid lake,
 And oft on Whist such frightful havock make,
 Distort his features, and inflame his eyes,
 From three important causes take their rise. 30

* Che nel Lago del Cuor m'era durata.

DANTE'S INFERNO, c. i. 20.

The

The first is *want of luck*, a pow'rful cause,
When fortune from your side entire withdraws ;
And tho' invok'd the whole complaining night,
With scarce one decent hand will blefs your fight ;
But still goes on inverted knaves to send, 35
Or aceless, faceless cards without an end.
And yet tho' this may seem a fair excuse,
For weaker minds their temper's pow'r to lose ;
Ne'er do thou yield to passion's wild controul,
Nor let his influence warp thy firmer soul. 40
But one poor trump your present cards contain,
And scarce an *honour* there, one *trick* to gain ;
But let not then your looks of wild despair
This state of weakness to the foes declare ;—
Next hand may give you fix, to make amends, 45
And put four kings and aces in your friend's.
But should your fate its malice still pursue,
And bar from ev'ry hope your anxious view,
Get up, and smiling say, You'll play no more ;
You won't be beaten till your bones are sore ; 50
And

And rather snatch the very worst excuse,
Than both your temper and your money lose.

Of temper's loss, another cruel cause,
Untoward play, our next attention draws;

When all your kings and aces, as they rise,
Are seen, by turns, with horror and surprise
In pieces cut before your angry eyes;

55 }

Or when, malignant fate's severest frown,
A dire *see-saw*, sends all to ruin down;

And tho' you might with ease the foe restrain,
Command's returning hour you wait in vain,
And never till too late the lead regain.

60 }

And here, indeed, in this vexatious case,
I could at times excuse a troubled face.

But let not still each adverse pow'r combin'd
Rob you of that you must so useful find,
The firm possession of your manly mind.

65 }

For then perhaps your violent despair
May blunt the quickness of your wonted care;

And

And while the mist of passion blinds your views, 70
Some fair occasion you may chance to lose
To check, tho' late, the cross career of play,
And turn the fortunes of the doubtful day.

Of causes not the least, tho' last in place,
Is that unlucky, cross, provoking case, 75

When in an evil hour, yourself conjoin'd
With some unskilful wretch you chance to find ;

With one perhaps who never look'd in Hoyle,
Or, if he did, who might have spar'd the toil :

Who neither memory nor judgment shews, 80

And of the plainest rules who nothing knows :

Whose thoughtless king, with firm undaunted face,

Comes frequent forth to meet the cruel ace ;

And who, in spite of warning, still proceeds

To play his foe's, and trump his partner's leads. 85

And here again, while such a cause I view,

I could at times excuse a curse or two.

But still remember, that on such a brain

The storm of passion must be spent in vain ;

Or,

Or, what is worfe, the very pains you take 90
 May ftill more ftupid chance his mind to make ;
 May darken quite what was not clear before,
 And from one blunder propagate a fcore.
 Much better had you then fubmit to fate,
 And ftill with patience your deliv'rance wait ; 95
 From his fupport all hopes at once refign,
 And to yourfelf alone your thoughts confine ;
 Without complaint his groffeft faults endure,
 And bear in filence what you cannot cure :
 And this, when plac'd on fuch unlucky ground, 100
 The ftilful player's mode will ftill be found ;
 Ev'n were he leagu'd with that illuftrious dame,
 Of whose nice judgment I have heard the fame ;
 To which her partner, when the hand was o'er,
 In thefe emphatic words his witnefs bore : 105
 " Of all the cards that thro' your fingers pafs'd,
 " But one you play'd aright, and that the laft."
 Oft have I feen fome matrimonial dove,
 Who, fram'd alone for tendernefs and love,

Some

Some two-fold game, perhaps, could better play, 110
Where nought occur'd to lead her thoughts astray.
Oft have I seen her with apparent fear
Cut in, reluctant, with her furly dear ;
Who most politely curs'd his wayward fate,
That then had sent him such a stupid mate ; 115
Nor thought that fault which now his temper cross'd,
Was the best virtue that a wife could boast.
At first the husband peaceful measures tries,
And warns her only with his hands and eyes ;
Then gentle language—" Pray, my dear, take care—
" Do think a little—What have you put there ?" 121
It rises next to—" Play not then so quick—
" The *trick* was mine—why did you trump my *trick*?"
Then, " Bless me, girl, you're always going wrong—
" If thus you play, we cannot stand it long." 125
And last of all, while starting up, he cries,
" Death, hell, and fury ! has the b—— no eyes ?"
Reverse the picture now, and view the strife
Of henpeck'd husband, and imperious wife.

L

Her

Here not by slow degrees the tempest grows, 130
 But bursts at once, and like a whirlwind blows ;
 While the poor, timid, meek, domestic thing
 Runs cow'ring off, and hangs his flagging wing.

No proof, perhaps, so much can temper try,
 As that which gaming's eager hours supply ; 135
 And therefore none, with those whose best regard
 They wish to keep, should ever touch a card :
 But chief, ye melting maids, whose constant care
 Spreads out for man the matrimonial snare,
 Left ye your temper's secret faults betray, 140
 At Whist but seldom with your lovers play :
 Take timely warning from Smilinda's fate,
 Whose hapless story I shall now relate ;
 For truth's best habit is a pleasing tale,
 And oft example moves where precepts fail. 145

Pufillo now had reach'd the prime of life,
 And long had look'd about to find a wife :
 Small was his size, but ample was his store,
 And ampler still the character he bore.

What

CANTO X.

163

What wonder then that ev'ry prudent maid 150

With secret joy his entrance still survey'd ;

And tried unwearied still each female art,

To gain an int'rest in the pigmy's heart ?

But young Smilinda was the destin'd fair

To prove the sweets of his peculiar care : 155

Her form was cast in that enchanting mould

Which love with most delight will still behold ;

And smiles complacent, with eternal grace,

Illum'd the sweetness of her angel face.

“ Unmingled bliss (if such on earth there be) 160

“ Must sure, fair virgin, be to live with thee.”

Such the conclusion which, at ev'ry view,

From her soft eyes the fond Pufillo drew.

And yet suspicion kept his hopes in awe,

Nor could he wholly trust to what he saw. 165

He knew that still before the lover's eyes

The simplest beauty wears a slight disguise ;

And, ere he ventur'd boldly to demand

The rich donation of her virgin hand ;

To which, from many signs, he well could see 170
 That neither she nor hers averse would be ;
 He thought it best some farther care to take,
 And one more nice experiment to make ;
 By which he might the certain knowledge gain,
 If she her temper could at cards retain : 175
 Resolv'd that, if she well this trial bore,
 He then would vainly hesitate no more ;
 Would freely then declare his nuptial view,
 And bid suspicion and distrust adieu.

For this, occasion soon the pow'r supplied, 180
 And plac'd him opposite his destin'd bride,
 One vernal ev'ning, in an easy way,
 A single rubber's length at Whist to play :
 While cousin Booby's son, a country 'squire,
 And aunt Rebecca made the second pair. 185

But ere the first commencing game was won,
 Our artful lover had his schemes begun ;
 Some slight mistakes he had already made,
 And then with anxious gaze her eyes survey'd :

CANTO X.

165

But still those eyes their placid charm retain, 190
 And all her features still unmov'd remain ;
 A peace that div'd no deeper than the skin,
 For fierce contending passions rag'd within ;
 Some sad wrong word was oft upon her tongue,
 Came to the tip, and there a moment hung ; 195
 But when reflection darted thro' her brain,
 She gave a gulp—and down it went again.

Nor was the contest long, till each could claim
 The fruitless triumph of a double game :
 Thus far did chance her equal smiles divide ; 200 }
 And still she seem'd unwilling to decide, }
 Or give pre-eminence to either side ;
 For, in the closing game, they both at once
 Within one step of conquest's goal advance :
 And now Pufillo thought the time was nigh, 205
 The utmost suff'rance of her soul to try ;
 For then each heart with greater zeal proceeds,
 And each occurrence more emotion breeds ;

L 3

Nor

Nor did he grudge (to gain his curious views)
 The rubber's praise and profit both to lose. 210

Smilinda now divides the cards with grace,
 And Scotia's curfe displays his nine-ey'd face;
 "Diamonds again!" cried all that form'd the ring;
 "I think we seldom have another thing."

The 'squire leads clubs, and aunt Rebecca's queen 215

Retires in triumph from the level green :

But when she tried the suit another round,

Fate was not then so favourable found ;

For scarce had Booby's king display'd his face,

Ere seiz'd and butcher'd by Puffillo's ace. 220

And now Puffillo's Pam, the prince of Loo,

In broad and brazen beauty meets the view :

To him on either hand small clubs are play'd,

While his renouncing partner drops a spade :

Than try the ten he could not now do less, 225

And fortune crown'd his hopes with full success ;

And from the trumps drew forth Rebecca's eight,

But from Smilinda's nine to meet its fate.

She

She now with careful eye her hand surveys,
 And from the knave a heart unwilling plays ; 230
 A vile, unlucky lead in ev'ry view—
 (And yet what better could the virgin do ?
 Her king of spades but once defended lay,
 And could not to the ace be left a prey :
 Her trumps, the last resort, were now too few, 235
 Since one from four her former triumph drew)
 A vile, unlucky lead ; for full command
 Lay couch'd in ambush in Rebecca's hand.
 Pufillo's king now shows his honest face,
 A hapless victim to her cruel ace : 240
 And now Rebecca's queen a trick to gain
 Had sanguine hopes ; nor did she hope in vain.
 The lead should ne'er be chang'd without a cause * ;
 So from her hand another heart she draws.

* There is nothing more pernicious at the game of Whist, than to change suits often, because in every new suit you run the risk of giving your adversary the tenace.

HOYLE, chap. xii.

This trick from fair Smilinda's luckless knave 245
Young Booby's deuce of trumps suffic'd to save.
And now another suit, the spades, he tries,
And views his partner's ace with joyful eyes :
The lead's return Smilinda's monarch drew—
'Twas both his int'rest, and his duty too. 250
But now the nymph no longer would delay,
Tho' rather weak, her suit of trumps to play :
But here her partner lent her pow'rful aid,
By whose good king the doubtful trick was made ;
And so next round she thought it no disgrace, 255
That her own queen should fall to Booby's ace.
The sov'reign pow'r she now at length had gain'd,
For tho' the queen was lost, the knave remain'd :
And now a lady rais'd to full command,
The queen of spades, appear'd from Booby's hand. 260
With but two spades Pufillo's hand begun,
And six of trumps might now the trick have won ;
(Three trumps were yet survivors after all,
For poor Rebecca flinch'd the second call)

And,

And, had he so inclin'd, his chance was sure 265
 This trick to conquer, and the game secure ;
 Since Booby's ten, the last concluding round,
 Would from Smilinda's knave its fate have found.
 But thoughts of diff'rent hue his mind engross ;
 His am'rous heart contemns the rubber's loss ; 270
 With wilful error slips the trump to play,
 And throws at one rash stroke their all away.

But when the falling cards the veil withdrew,
 Which hid the grossness of his fault from view,
 The gentle creature could endure no more, 275
 She started up, she stamp'd, she rag'd, she swore ;
 Proclaim'd her wrongs, and threw the cards away,
 Nor longer in his presence deign'd to stay.

A work, alone by length of ages done,
 Is oft by ruin in an hour undone ; 280
 And thus that flame, which had for years endur'd,
 In one short minute was entirely cur'd :

No longer now the youth attentive paid
 His daily visits to the charming maid,
 Who found, too late, she had herself betray'd ; 285

And

And ev'ry female art essay'd in vain,
Her former empire o'er his heart to gain.

At last, with hopes resulting from despair,
She fate her down, to vent her cruel care;
While anxious fear suppress'd her virgin pride, 290
And all the eloquence of love supplied.

She first besought him for sweet pity's sake
No longer to resent the rude mistake,
Which passion's pow'r had forc'd her once to make;
And next in blushing words she let him know 295
How much his absence fill'd her breast with woe;

With what affection and esteem combin'd
She view'd his person, and beheld his mind;
And should his bosom feel an equal care,
She hinted, that he might his soul declare, 300
And need not of a just return despair.

Such was the scope on which her fyren tongue
Full many a note of soft allurements sung;
Concluding thus: that tho' they both were
young,

It

CANTO X.

371

It was not right in uselefs, vain delay 305

To waste the prime of life's uncertain day.

With trembling hope she sent the billet strait,
Whose doubtful issue was to fix her fate;
Nor for an answer had she long to wait:
Th'important note a yellow wafer seal'd, 310

'Twas brief, but yet his mind enough reveal'd:

"When cards and dice are banish'd from the land,

"Pufillo then will ask Smilinda's hand."

In

IN order that the description of a hand at Whist, which has been attempted in this Canto, may be the more easily comprehended by the reader, I shall subjoin both a view of the different hands, and a scheme of the cards in the order they were played.

BOOBY'S, THE ELDER HAND.

Ace, ten, tray, and deuce of trumps—king and three small clubs—queen and two small spades—two small hearts.

PUSILLO'S, THE SECOND HAND.

King, six, and four of trumps—ace, knave, ten, and a small club—king and three small hearts—two small spades.

REBECCA'S, THE THIRD HAND.

Eight and five of trumps—ace, knave, and three small spades—ace, queen, and a small heart—queen and two small clubs.

SMILINDA'S, THE LAST HAND.

Queen, knave, nine, and seven of trumps—knave ¹⁰⁺² and three small hearts—king and two small spades—two small clubs.

DIAMONDS ARE TRUMPS—AND THE NINE TURNED UP
BY SMILINDA.

Round I.

Booby's deuce of clubs—Pusillo's tray—Rebecca's queen—
and Smilinda's four.

Round

x bad should open spade suit

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Round II.

✕ Rebecca's five of clubs—Smilinda's six—Booby's king—
and Pufillo's ace.

Round III.

Pufillo's knave of clubs—Rebecca's seven—Smilinda's deuce
of spades—and Booby's eight of clubs.

Round IV.

Pufillo's ten of clubs—Rebecca's eight of trumps—Smilinda's
nine—and Booby's nine of clubs.

Round V

Smilinda's deuce of hearts—Booby's tray—Pufillo's king—
and Rebecca's ace.

Round VI.

✕ Rebecca's queen of hearts—Smilinda's four—Booby's five—
and Pufillo's six.

Round VII.

Rebecca's seven of hearts—Smilinda's ¹⁰knave—Booby's deuce
of trumps—and Pufillo's eight of hearts.

Round VIII.

Booby's tray of spades—Pufillo's four—Rebecca's ace—and
Smilinda's five.

Round IX.

Rebecca's six of spades—Smilinda's king—Booby's seven—
and Pufillo's eight.

Round X.

Smilinda's seven of trumps—Booby's tray—Pufillo's king—
and Rebecca's five.

Round

WHIST.

Round XI.

Pufillo's four of trumps—Rebecca's nine of spades—Smilinda's queen of trumps—and Booby's ace.

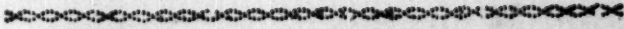
Round XII.

Booby's queen of spades—Pufillo's nine of hearts—Rebecca's ten of spades—and Smilinda's knave of trumps.

Round XIII.

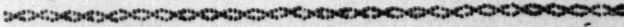
Smilinda's ten of hearts—Booby's ten of trumps—Pufillo's six—and Rebecca's knave of spades.

Smilinda three tricks, and Pufillo three—Booby three tricks, but Rebecca four.



W H I S T.

CANTO XL.



ARGUMENT.

The Author's complaint against his Father; who obliges
him to clap to the end of his work, a Lecture against
Gaming, of his dictating.

We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow. POPE.

Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero, censor, castigatore minorum. HORACE.

GOOD Lord ! what arrant fools some people are,
With all their stuff of prudence, sense, and care !
In vain old father Time his influence tries ;
He makes them proud, but never makes them wise.
They fondly think that they should all things know, 5
Because they liv'd some fifty years ago ;
Nor once reflect, this age has other rules,
And other maxims than these formal fools,
Were it not grossly to abuse my pow'r,
I could rail on, and curse them by the hour : 10
For pure vexation I could almost cry ;
But listen, reader, and I'll tell you why.

A fire I have (so much the worse for me),
As great a pedant as you'd wish to see ;

M

Morose

Morose, ill-natur'd, rigid, and severe ; 15

Sententious, dull, old-fashion'd, stiff, and queer :

In short, a soul that hates each custom new,

And censures all that youngsters like to do.

Those schemes of mine which have to him been
shewn, }

He seldom praises but in sneering tone, — 20 }

And likes no wit or wisdom but his own.

Without his knowledge then I Whist began,

And still from him conceal'd the darling plan ;

For, ev'n without a proof, I could have guess'd
That such a project would not hit his taste. 25

Now when thus far I had the strain pursued,
I paus'd, and what was done with joy review'd ;

And thought it (if I here the truth may tell)

Hit off upon the whole exceeding well, }

And only wanting for a smart farewell. 30 }

But whilst I thus indulg'd a poet's pride, }

And fondly sail'd on fancy's golden tide, }

I little thought Papa was at my side. }

For

For his stern eyes I was but ill prepar'd,
 And could have gladly then his visit spar'd : 35

But vile, malignant chance would have it so,
 And I with patience now must bear the blow.

—At once, with looks which dark suspicion wore,
 He from my trembling hand the papers tore,
 And ran, with fullen glance, the sprightly pages
 o'er. 40

Ev'n those I thought, while I pursued the toil,
 That none could e'er peruse without a smile,
 Had not the pow'r his anger to beguile. }

Unalter'd still his awful face remain'd,
 And all its native rigour still retain'd : 45

Nay worse ; a darker hue his front embrown'd,
 Or (not to speak in poetry) he frown'd.

Thus thro' the work with hasty glance he ran,
 And thus his stern, despotic speech began :

“ So so, young graceless ; now your stuff is done,
 “ You think, no doubt, you have a triumph won ; 51
 “ You think, no doubt, that all is mighty fine,
 “ Wit, sense, and elegance in ev'ry line ;

" And with a brazen front may mean to try
 " In this fool's coat to meet the public eye. 55
 " Audacious boy ! and could you then suppose
 " That I would see you thus yourself expose ?
 " That I would e'er permit a son of mine
 " To future times such lessons to consign ?
 " So widely thus from moral truth to stray, 60
 " And poison thus in gilded pills convey ?
 " But if, in reason's spite, you still persist
 " To claim distinction as the Bard of Whist,
 " I am resolv'd that this infected song
 " Shall bear at least its antidote along ; 65
 " And those who gaming's charms have heard from
 you,
 " From me at least shall hear its horrors too."

With this last hint I was not quite displeas'd,
 And quick as thought the fair occasion seiz'd ;
 And promis'd strait, with some invective strong,
 Against the love of play to close the song. 71

But here, alas ! the old suspicious Don
 Was far too cunning for his sprightly son.

" No,

" No no," he cried, " that plan could never do ;
 " It is not by the help of such as you, 75
 " That reason's voice must folly's pow'r subdue." }

" To me, young sir, resign that arduous care,
 " And for the task of scribe yourself prepare ;
 " While I retire, those scatter'd thoughts to find,
 " With which the subject oft has fill'd my mind ; 80
 " To which at times I have attention paid,
 " And oft with grief its rapid growth survey'd.
 " And when my hints are rang'd in just array,
 " I then will dictate what you ought to say : " }
 So spake the angry fire, and stately stalk'd away.

Fain would I, while he yet remain'd in sight, 86
 Have boldly urg'd my just, exclusive right
 To manage as I chose, and thought it fit
 Th' unborrow'd offspring of my native wit ;
 But terror aw'd, and what I meant to say 90
 Stuck in my throat, and could not find a way.


Thus must this tongue, by fancy's pow'r refin'd,
 Be made the organ of another's mind ;

And thus, by cruelty before unknown,
 Be forc'd to utter feelings not my own ; 95
 And thus my pretty work be fairly spoil'd,
 Because I chance—to be my father's child.

But hush ! he comes again ; I hear the sound
 Of those grave steps that scatter fear around.
 Now, reader, now, prepare your patient ear 100
 A lecture dull of formal length to hear ;
 But which, I trust, will never reach your brain,
 But from your other ear come out again.

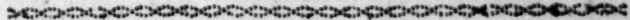
But hold ; and, ere I write a sentence more,
 Let me for that another leaf turn o'er. 105
 You understand me—for it would not do,
 That he should listen* all I speak to you.

* As they had seen me, with these hangman's hands,
 Lift'ning their fear.



W H I S T.

CANTO XII.



ARGUMENT.

Serious lecture against gaming.—History of a skilful and
fortunate gamester.—Postscript by the Author in the
humorous style.

Arm'd at all points, to fight that hydra, Gaming. MOORE.

——— Contra o veneno urgente,
He tido por antidoto excellente. CAMOENS.

OF all the plagues that from the birth of time
Have rang'd by turns this sublunary clime,
And in their various forms the nations curs'd,
The boundless love of play is sure the worst.
Not that disease, whose once resistless pow'r 5
With envious malice blasted beauty's flow'r;
Which from the east with those weak fools re-
turn'd,
Whose frantic breasts with bigot fury burn'd :
Nor that commission'd by the pow'rs above,
With tortures just to punish lawless love : 10
That

That cruel scourge*, which from the western shore
 To Europe's coast the Spanish robbers bore,
 Such havock spreads, as on his baleful wings
 The univerfal pow'r of gaming brings ;
 That pow'r which now pervades each tainted soul,
 And scatters death from Indus to the Pole ; 16
 From where remote, on Tonquin's golden shore,
 The tawny crew the pow'rs of chance adore ;
 , And, when resources fail, no scruple make
 Their weeping children or their wives to stake ; 20
 To where at home, in this degen'rate land,
 In ev'ry street the fanes of ruin stand ;
 Where fraud's pernicious band, unwearied still,
 Invoke the demons of unlawful skill :
 That selfish pow'r, the foe of useful art, 25
 Which most can harden and contract the heart ;

* Il est certain, que ce venin qui empoisonne les sources de la
 Vie, était propre de l'Amérique——et aujourd'hui, après un mo-
 ment passé et oublié depuis des années, la plus chaste union peut
 être suivie du plus cruel et du plus honteux des fléaux, dont le
 genre humain soit affligé.

VOLTAIRE, ESSAI SUR L'HIST. GEN. t. iii. ch. 37.

Which

Which keeps in sloth* the outward frame confin'd,
 And but to vicious action spurs the mind ;
 That pow'r whose growth I can with grief foresee
 Some future day will Europe's ruin be, 30

But words that seek our passions to restrain,
 In this light age of folly's boundless reign, }
 But small attention can expect to gain ;
 And it perhaps were better now to try
 What stronger aids example can supply. 35

A man there was (if public fame say true),
 The first and luckiest of the gaming crew ;
 A splendid fortune who resolv'd to gain,
 Without corporeal labour's tiresome pain, }
 Or mental efforts of the studious brain. 40

* Surely that vice deserves the keenest invective, which, more than any other, has a natural and invincible tendency to narrow and to harden the heart, by impressing and keeping up habits of selfishness. " I foresee" (said Montesquieu to a friend visiting him at La Brede) " that gaming will one day be the ruin of Europe.—During play, the body is in a state of indolence, and " the mind in a state of vicious activity."

WARTON'S ESSAY ON POPE, Sect. x. 18.

For

For this, to gaming's art he kept confin'd
The whole attention of his anxious mind ;
For this, in trying various modes of play,
He spent for years the solitary day ;
For this, on slightest food he chose to dine, 45
Nor e'er would taste intoxicating wine ;
That nought might thus obscure his mental sight,
Or blast the hopes of each triumphant night.
And thus at length a height of skill he gain'd,
Which scarce one mortal had before attain'd ; 50
And thus at length amass'd an ampler store
Than ever had been thus amass'd before.
What tho', perhaps, some widow'd mother's tongue
Might curse the source from which her sorrow
 sprung ;
Might curse that skill which drove, with cruel hand,
Her ruin'd son to quit his native land : 56
What tho', perhaps, some orphan weak and pale,
With hunger faint, and shiv'ring in the gale,
Might

Might on that chariot fix his weeping eye,
In guilty splendor as it glitter'd by, 60
Which bore the wretch, who from his father tore
Without remorse his patrimonial store;
Who charg'd his soul with shame's despairing
weight,

And drove him headlong from the brink of fate:
Yet would that chariot all obstruction spurn, 65
And not less rapid to the dome return,
Which, rear'd in Scotia's land, may still be found,
And cumbers with its weight the groaning ground;
Which, as it there in hateful splendor stands,
With daring hopes the gamester's heart expands; 70
While reason's sober eye beholds it still,
The shameful monument of guilty skill.

Oh that, when first he view'd the finish'd toil,
And gaz'd with triumph on the splendid pile,
Some demon then, or some avenging god, 75
Had touch'd the structure with his pow'ful rod,
And

And made it sink before his startled eyes,
 Like card-built fabrics, never more to rise.
 How would the wretch have shrunk with sudden
 awe,

And quak'd with terror, when amaz'd he saw, 80
 Instead of arches, gates, and colonnades,
 A heap of clubs and diamonds, hearts and spades!

'Tis true indeed, that few or none complain'd,
 That what they lost had been unfairly gain'd:

But how can this his character excuse, 85
 Or make his life its guilty colour lose?

As well might he, who lurks beside the way,
 To make th' unwary traveller his prey;

With pistols arm'd, and constant practice bold,
 Who stops th' unarm'd, the timid, and the old; 90
 Proclaims his wants, and asks a quick supply,

Which if they give not, they are sure to die—

As well this wretch, when talking with his friend,
 Might fair and open dealing recommend;

For

CANTO XII.

191

For meaner rogues a just ahhorrence feel, 95
 And bleſs his Maker that he did not ſteal.

But in its juſt revenge tho' Heav'n be ſlow,
 It will not always let the ſinner go;
 For now, to cloſe the ſcene, his worſt of foes,
 Conſcience herſelf, in awful fury roſe, 100
 Reſum'd at laſt her long-neglected pow'r,
 And ſtung with painful thought each tort'ring
 hour.—

She brought reflection's band in dark array,
 To cloud the light of ev'ry cheerleſs day;
 And fill'd with ghafly phantoms of affright 105
 The weary length of ev'ry trembling night.
 Nor did ſhe once remit her cruel rage,
 Until ſhe drove him from the mortal ſtage,
 To thoſe abodes, where he perhaps ſhall find
 That man for diff'rent duties was deſign'd, 110 }
 And form'd for ſcience of another kind,
 Than in the vain purſuits of worthleſs play
 To waſte the precious hours of life away:

Perhaps

Perhaps to dwell in that appointed place
 Of pain and grief, of horror and disgrace, 115
 Where He resides, whose books (to fraud so dear)
 With such unwearied pains he studied here.

P O S T S C R I P T.

NOW, blest be Heav'n, the tedious lecture's o'er,
 And old Square-toes will trouble us no more;
 And yet I cannot leave you thus behind, 120
 With such absurd impressions on your mind,
 Nor wholly thus to his advice resign,
 Until you hear a little more of mine.

Can there then be whose tempers are so rough,
 Whose hearts are made of such unfeeling stuff, 125
 That they could wish from our imperfect life
 To cut the brilliant hours of painted strife,

And

POSTSCRIPT.

193

And from the worthless world to drive away
The hopes, the pleasures, and the pains of play ?

Let those who harbour such a strange desire, 130

To some obscure, sequester'd nook retire ;

Where thro' the tedious year no Spades are found,

But those that serve to penetrate the ground ;

No Clubs, but those, with which some angry clown

Knocks, at a time, his fellow rustic down ; 135

No Hearts, but those, with which in passion's hour

The wanton boy displays his sovereign pow'r :

And as for Diamonds, you in vain may call,

For there they never can be found at all.

There let all such their lives in languor waste, 140

And rail at pleasures which they cannot taste.

But ye that live in fashion's polish'd climes,

In this great art instruct your sons betimes ;

Let this be still the first of your regards,

Before their letters let them learn their cards. 145

Nor do I yet despair to see the day,

When hostile armies rang'd in neat array,

Instead of fighting, shall engage in play ;

N

When

When peaceful Whift the quarrel shall decide,
 And Christian blood be fpilt on neither fide. 150
 Then duels too, or any other fray,
 Might all be fought in this good harmlefs way;
 Then pleas no more fhould wait the tardy laws,
 But one odd *trick* at once conclude the caufe.
 Tho' fome will fay that this is nothing new, 155
 For here there have been long *odd tricks* enow.

Thus Britain ftill, to all the world's furprife,
 In this great fciences hall progreflive rife,
 Till ages hence, when all of each degree
 Shall play the game as well as Hoyle or me. 160

THE END.

As an antidote to the poisonous doctrine delivered with regard to matrimony in the seventh Canto*, the Author begs leave to subjoin here a Sonnet written upon the same subject, which will shew how very different are his real sentiments from those of the character he has chosen to assume.

S O N N E T.

HOW blest is he, however low his state,
To whom the bounty of indulgent Heav'n
A tender, constant, kind congenial mate,
To share his pleasures and his pains, has giv'n!
To her secure he opens all his heart,
Nor knows one thought he wishes to conceal;
Fearless to her can ev'ry care impart,
And all the sorrows of his soul reveal.
Tho' all abroad refuse his spirit rest,
Tho' fortune frowns, and friends may prove
unkind;
At home, he knows, remains one faithful breast,
Where still his weary head repose shall find.
Ah! why to me does fate such bliss deny,
And doom me still to live "a solitary fly?"

* V. 105—108.

